

April 2008

# CRIME TIMES

## Arizona Mystery Writers

### Book Signing

The first AMW book signing is set for **April 6th at 1:00 P.M at Borders Bookstore** on Oracle Rd south of Wetmore Rd. There are eight authors signing. . Jan Pope will be selling our anthology, A Way with Murder. Stella Clancy, Carol Dee, Elizabeth Gunn, Marci Martin, Karen McLeish, Anthony Minadeo, and Myrtle Nord will present with their books and will be waiting for you, your friends and family to come.

### Workshop- April 12, 2008



Richard Rohrdanz will unveil the Arizona Mystery Writers' web site. The site will be active a day or two prior to the meeting. He invites you to visit the web site (<http://www.ArizonaMysteryWriters.com>) before you attend the meeting so you can come prepared with questions. If you can't see it before the meeting Richard will show you what it looks like during the workshop.

After 5 years in the Air Force as a navigator on B-52s and a couple of years in electronics, AMW member, Richard Rohrdanz discovered his real calling - computers. Through the auspices of the Center for Lifelong Learning at Harvard University, he taught BASIC programming and other computer skills from 1978 to 1988. After his move to Tucson in 1994, he took a course in web design at Pima Community College and added another facet to his resume. Although he considers himself semi-retired, he still designs web sites and is working on a novel as well as several short stories. His hobbies include flying, photography and all things electronic.

*If my doctor told me I had only six minutes to live, I wouldn't brood. I'd type a little faster.*  
**Isaac Asimov**



### Speaker for April 12 Meeting- **Amber Harrison- Forensic Anthropologist**

Amber Harrison was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas, getting both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Anthropology from Wichita State University. She began her undergraduate work with the intention of becoming a large animal vet, having spent the majority of her life as an equestrian. In 2003 she graduated with an MA

in Anthropology with a focus in Biological (also known as Physical) Anthropology (the sub discipline including Forensic Anthropology). Her thesis topic was an investigation of sexual dimorphism in the human pelvic bone to improve methods of sex determination in forensic and archaeological applications. She continues work on this topic, and has collected data from a variety of populations in an effort to refine the current methods of sex determination using the pelvis. She is currently working for SRI on the downtown Tucson archaeological dig, one of the largest urban recovery projects in the country.

### **Sample of Forensic Anthropology by Kevin Josker-**

*Kevin has written the following story. Is this scenario possible? Would this stand up to close scrutiny by sophisticated readers and fans? Come find out as Amber Harrison makes her presentation on Forensic Anthropology at the April meeting.*

Amy walked through the desert, head down, looking for rattlesnakes coiled up at the base of bushes, her boots crunching the granitic soil. Four teenagers had gone missing four months ago, vanished without a trace, never heard from again. Up until now they were presumed runaways, but the police suspected they might turn up this way – eventually. Hundreds of abandoned mine shafts existed around the state, located in remote areas, accessible only by 4-wheel drive vehicles. The state had decided to find as many of these as possible and erect protective fencing around the openings after inspection and mapping. You never know what you might find down there. This shaft was in the process of identification when the discovery was made.

There they were found, still in their vehicle. The full size pickup truck went in head first, plummeted down the shaft 60-feet, crashing to the bottom, wedging itself against the rock walls. The back seat survivors had crawled out the back window. The driver died shortly after impact, the steering column crushing his sternum, breaking several ribs, puncturing his lungs. The front seat passenger had both legs broken and was wedged underneath the dashboard. The two passengers survived the crash only to starve to death after their friend had died slowly in agony before their very eyes. The truck had been lifted out, the bodies recovered, positive identifications made.

That wasn't why Amy was here, though. After the shaft had been cleared, further inspection revealed five more bodies at the bottom of the shaft; skeletons now. It was assumed five because of the skulls found. The truck had smashed the bones. Amy was here to help determine if the bodies were dumped here after they were murdered, or if they were thrown into the pit alive and left to die. She would determine age, sex, height, and race from the skeletal remains, and possibly time of death. Forensic anthropology had made some leaps forward in the last decade, but field work was still done by hand with small brushes, garden tools, and sifters.

Amy was lowered by cage into the maw of the sarcophagus. Suspended ten feet from the bottom she surveyed the scene. One skeleton was propped up against the wall, apparently surviving the fall. The other four were in a crushed heap, bones crossing each other, suggesting to her they remained where they fell, possibly dead when they went in. She saw a hole in one of the skulls, looked like a female, reinforcing her initial theory. The other bones were smaller, suggesting children. Maybe the four were executed at the edge, in front of the survivor. Maybe they formed the cushion for the fifth one shoved in after the fact, left alone with the corpses. What could that person have done to deserve such a fate? She slipped her camera out and started snapping photos. The bones would be recovered, boxed up, and transported to her lab where they would be reassembled for analysis, DNA recovered, if possible. Historic records would be searched for missing persons, mysterious disappearances, sudden changes to the ebb and flow of routine life.

Amy loved her job.

If you are attending the meeting, please call Mary Bellin 520-577-7270 or email her by clicking on the blue address: [newsletter@ArizonaMysteryWriters.com](mailto:newsletter@ArizonaMysteryWriters.com) or [membership@ArizonaMysteryWriters.com](mailto:membership@ArizonaMysteryWriters.com) and type in- I'm coming to the meeting.

*Practice, practice, practice writing. Writing is a craft that requires both talent and acquired skills. You learn by doing, by making mistakes and then seeing where you went wrong. Jeffrey A. Carver*

## **March Workshop Summary by Jan Pope**



Susan L. Miller's March workshop was an educational and entertainment delight taken from a book by Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter. The session was divided into three parts.

Part I. The object was to take an event from our own lives and transform it by way of various extensions into a fiction or fictions for future use. It might well be a literary version of the musical "variations on a theme". It consisted of seven five minute exercises. Beginning with a true seminal episode of your life, we changed it from a first person account to third person, to a person older than ourselves, to one younger, to a different country, to a set of emotional reactions and finally extrapolating the emotion of the experience to a whole different story line. A truly fascinating exercise.

Part II was an exercise in learning when not to use -ly adverbs by doing an exercise which insisted we replace the dreaded -ly adjectives with the word or words in order to make the meaning stronger than before. And finally, Part III, which encouraged us to "learn to lie" by writing three things which happened to, all of which could have happened, but only one of the three is true. Each of us in turn read the sentences to the group and we guessed which were true, which were lies. This last was great fun and for maybe the first time ever, every single attendee participated and read life as he/she lived it—whether real or imaginary.

This was a great workshop and we thank Susan for taking the time to entertain and educate.

*I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil. Truman Capote*

## **March Speaker Summary by Mary Bellin**



Our March speaker was Chris Peterson, a retired police detective, who received the Award of Valor from the Sheriff's Office, Portland, OR. Chris gave us detailed information about the police work and inside stories involving the famous serial murder case known as the "Happy Face Killer." Keith Hunter Jespersen, a long distance trucker, killed 8 women before he was caught. Chris was not involved in the early police work of the case when the first known victim pretty but slightly retarded, 23-year-old Taunja Bennett was killed. Briefly, on Tuesday evening, January 23, 1990, she went out for a few drinks at the B & I Tavern. Taunja was dressed appropriately for the cold, damp night, typical weather for that time of year in Portland, Oregon. Jespersen, a 35-five-year-old, 240 pound, 6-feet 6-inches tall man reportedly took Taunja to his apartment and strangled her with a rope during a sex act and several hours later, dumped her body at Crown Point, a secluded mountain area. A few days later, a hiker found Taunja's body.

A few weeks after the murder, the police got a tip. Laverne Pavlinac, 57, an avid reader of mysteries and true crime books, as well as a devoted fan of television's Matlock, was familiar with police procedures and she decided that Taunja's case could serve as the perfect vehicle to end her abusive 10-year relationship with her live-in boyfriend, 43-year-old John Sosnovske. Laverne reported John as the killer. When it looked as if John might be freed, Laverne implicated herself in the murder. Laverne was arrested for murder. Even though she recanted her story, a jury found her guilty. To avoid the death penalty, John pleaded no contest.

After the conviction, Jespersen began writing on bathroom walls as he drove truck across the country that he killed Taunja Bennett. He also sent letters describing Taunja's murder and killing other women. He would sign his letters with a smiley or happy face. Once the newspapers found out of the signing, Jespersen was dubbed the Happy Face Killer. The last victim was his girl friend. That was the first time he killed someone he knew. He was

arrested in Arizona. Chris Peterson joined the task force when Jespersen was arrested. Chris interviewed Jespersen many times and was part of the search effort that proved that Jespersen was the Happy Face Killer and had been responsible for Tauja's death. The twists, turns, lies and deceit that Chris described kept all of us listening to every word. Thank you Chris for the in depth analysis of the detective work to convict the Happy Face Killer, Jeff Hunter Jespersen.

### Upcoming events:



**Special Event-** Spend Sunday afternoon, March 30, solving mysteries! SSA's "Reader's Theater" offers two murder mysteries (one act plays): – "Shot in the Dark in My Little Grass Shack in the Tropics" and "Deadline Dilemma." The audience will have an opportunity to question the suspects and name the murderers. Fun and prizes!

Doors open at 1:15 pm; Show starts at 2 pm. Two Arizona Mystery Writer's members are taking part – is one of them a murderer? Or, will one of them be murdered?

St. Frances Cabrini Church Hall, 3201 E. Presidio –(one block south of Ft. Lowell off of Country Club Road – Turn East on Presidio to church – lots of parking). Admission \$10.00 per person – Free Refreshments.

**AMW Book Signing-** AMW will have a book signing at Borders at Oracle and Wetmore Roads on Sunday, April 6, 2008. Information is provided in the box on the first page.

**SSA Writing Contest** - The deadline date for submission of entries is May 31, 2008. Entry blanks may be obtained online at: [www.ssa-az.org](http://www.ssa-az.org), or by sending an SASE to SSA Entry Forms Dept. P.O. Box 35484, Tucson, AZ 85740, or by e-mailing Mary Ann Hutchison at [douglashutchison@comcast.net](mailto:douglashutchison@comcast.net)

**Tucson Romance Writers-** The Saguaro Romance Writers April Meeting features double Golden Heart finalist and multi-published author, Judy Duarte. Judy will be presenting two must-hear talks, "Matchmaking 101: Creating, Sustaining, and Overcoming Conflict in a Romance" and "How to Make a Career Writing Category Romance." We will meet on Saturday, April 26, from 10 am to 1:30 pm, at El Parador Tropical Restaurant in Tucson, 2744 E Broadway Blvd. For reservations, email Suzanne Moore at [suz72350@hotmail.com](mailto:suz72350@hotmail.com). The cost is \$15 for SRW members and \$20 for guests; lunch is included in the price.

*Write from the soul, not from some notion what you think the marketplace wants. The market is fickle; the soul is eternal. Jeffrey A. Carver*

### Web Sites Announcing Writing Contests:

**Mystery Writers of America** is announcing contest, winners and dates- <http://www.mysterywriters.org/>



#### **St. Martin's Minotaur/MWA First Crime Novel Competition**

Mystery Writers of America is pleased and excited to announce its partnership with St. Martin's Minotaur in sponsoring the St. Martin's Minotaur/Mystery Writers of America First Crime Novel Competition.

This contest provides a previously unpublished writer an opportunity to launch his or her career with a major mystery imprint, St. Martin's Minotaur. The winner will receive a one-book, \$10,000 contract. The competition

is open to any writer who has never been the author of a published novel. Details, rules and specific guidelines on eligibility, as well as entry forms, are available at the [St. Martin's Minotaur website](http://www.stmartinsminotaur.com).

**Reader's Digest-** <http://www.writersdigest.com/contests/>

### **16th Annual *Writer's Digest* International Self-Published Book Awards**

Co-sponsored by Book Marketing Works, LLC

#### **CALL FOR ENTRIES**

MORE THAN \$15,000 IN PRIZES!

**ENTRY DEADLINE: Thursday, May 01, 2008**

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*Writer's Digest* is searching for the best self-published books of the past few years. Whether you're a professional writer, part-time freelancer, or a self-starting student, here's your chance to enter the *only* competition exclusively for self-published books!

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For 77 years, the **Annual *Writer's Digest* Competition** has rewarded writers just like you for their finest work. We continue the tradition by giving away more than \$30,000 in cash and prizes!

**Win a trip to New York City !**

**GRAND PRIZE:** \$3,000 cash and a trip to New York City to meet with editors or agents. *Writer's Digest* will fly you and a guest to The Big Apple, where you'll spend three days and two nights in the publishing capital of the world. While you're there, a *Writer's Digest* editor will escort you to meet and share your work with four editors or agents! Plus, you'll receive a free Diamond Publishing Package from [Outskirts Press](http://www.outskirtspress.com).

**Entry Deadline: Thursday, May 15, 2008**

*The role of the writer is not to say what we can all say but what we are unable to say. Anais Nin*

#### **Board member information:**

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Web site Coordinator-Richard Rohrdanz, [webmaster@ArizonaMysteryWriters.com](mailto:webmaster@ArizonaMysteryWriters.com)

**MEETING INFO:** Second Saturday of the Month- next is April 12, 2008, HomeTown Buffet at the northwest corner of Oracle and River roads.

**TIMES:** AMW business meeting for all members 10:00 – 10:15 am, workshop 10:15 - 11:30 pm, Lunch 11:30 – 12:30, Speaker 12:30 – 2:00 pm.

**COST:** Exact change or check is appreciated, Speaker, Workshop and lunch = \$12.00. Yearly Dues = \$25.



**Share a ride!** A few members have asked about car pooling. One member who lives near Craycroft Road and 5<sup>th</sup> Street would like a ride. If you are interested in car pooling, please let me

know- [newsletter@arizonamysterywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@arizonamysterywriters.com)



## Writing Critique Groups Wanted!

If you are in a group looking for new members, or would like to be in a group, please contact Mary at [newsletter@ArizonaMysteryWriters.com](mailto:newsletter@ArizonaMysteryWriters.com). Let me know when and where you meet, and what your group emphasizes, ie, is it just mysteries, or general fiction. Plus, how do you function. Do you read a short piece at the meeting? Or do you hand out chapters before the meeting? How many people and who are the AMW members in your group?

If you are looking for a group or wanting to form one, tell me when you are available to meet, and what type of writing/group are you looking for.

Have a productive writing month! See you April 12, 2008.  
Mary Bellin and the AMW Board of Directors.

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