

Sleuth Saver



OCTOBER 2013 ISSUE

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HOUSTON MWASW GROUP OCTOBER 19 MEETING

Join us for a round table discussion. We want to hear about works in progress, marketing ideas, how you feel about publishing today and whether you plan to go, or have gone, the traditional route or if you are self-publishing. What problems are you experiencing and what kind of help are you seeking? Let's find answers.

The Houston MWASW group meets the third Saturday of each month. **Meeting time is Noon-2:00 p.m.** Meeting place will be at Spaghetti Western Italian Café on Shepherd and I-10. 1506 Shepherd Dr., Houston, TX 77007. **\$5.00 door fee, cash only.** Contact lelvebak@sbcglobal.net or call our reservation line: 713-797-8464.

Sleuth Clues and News

TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL

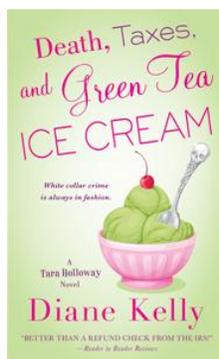
Join us at the **Texas Book Festival** on the Capitol grounds in Austin on **October 26th and 27th**. The **Southwest Chapter of Mystery Writers of America** will have a booth where our authors can display and sell their books.

We still need volunteers, especially for Sunday. You don't want to miss this opportunity. By volunteering at the booth for a certain amount of time (depending on how many sign up) you will be able to showcase and sell your books while promoting membership in MWA.

To volunteer, please email Laura Elvebak at lelvebak@sbcglobal.net and let her know if you will be bringing books to sell or just want to help out with the booth as well as the hours you would like to volunteer at our booth.

Kay Finch has sold 3 books in her new Bad Luck Cat Mystery series to Berkley Prime Crime. Estimated publication of the first book is mid-to-late 2015.

Bev Vincent's short story "The Honey Trap" was one of ten chosen from blind submissions by MWA members for the 2014 anthology *Ice Cold* edited by Jeffery Deaver and Raymond Benson. Invited contributors to this Cold War-themed anthology include Joseph Finder, J.A. Jance, John Lescroart, Laura Lippman, Gayle Lynds with John Sheldon, Katherine Neville, Sara Paretsky, and T. Jefferson Parker. This is Vincent's second appearance in an MWA anthology. "Rule Number One" appeared in the Michael Connelly edited *The Blue Religion*.



Book #6 of Diane Kelly's IRS Special Agent Tara Holloway series is now available. After all she's done for the IRS, a few too many shots fired from her weapon and suddenly Special Agent Tara Holloway is public enemy number one. Tara's using green tea ice cream to soothe her disappointment, as well as the terrifying prospect of a life behind bars. But she's about to get a taste of just how dangerous her life can be...
www.dianekelly.com; www.facebook.com/dianekellybooks
www.twitter.com/dianekellybooks
 Sign up for her mailing list at: <http://www.dianekelly.com/contact/>



Register NOW for MWA University – Dallas

Date: Saturday, December 14, 2013

Location: W Dallas – Victory
2440 Victory Park Ln – Grand Ballroom
Dallas, TX 75219
214-397-4100

What: An entire day of top-notch classes. Novice or pro, you will benefit from hearing the experts discuss their strategies for all facets of writing and publishing.

Below is a schedule preview (subject to change).

Schedule

8:15 - 8:50 AM: Check-in
8:55 – 9:00 AM: Welcome – MWA’s Executive Vice President – **Daniel J. Hale**

9:00 – 10:00 AM: **After the Idea**
Teacher: **Jess Lourey** (Jess Lourey is the author of the Murder-by-Month mysteries and a tenured professor of English and sociology at a two-year Minnesota college.)

“If you wish to be a writer, write.” But how? You’ve got the great idea, the one that won’t let you go, that embellishes itself as you walk around your day. But how do you grow that kernel into a compelling story, and where do you find the time? This class gives you the tools to turn a good idea into a great novel. Bring a notebook and writing utensil.

10:15 -11:15 AM: **Dramatic Structure & Plot**
Teacher: **Hallie Ephron** (Hallie Ephron is the author of psychological suspense *Never Tell a Lie*, crime fiction book reviewer for the Boston Globe, and author of the Edgar-nominated *Writing and Selling Your Mystery Novel*.)

Since Aristotle, the three-act structure for storytelling has reigned supreme, but does it still hold true for modern crime writers? Is it the best way, or the only way, to tell your tale? Is plotting simply sequencing your scenes or is there more to it? This class will teach you the art of storytelling and plotting so your manuscript will attract the attention it deserves.

11:30 – 12:30 PM: **Setting & Description**
Teacher: **Reed Farrel Coleman** (Twice nominated for the Edgar® and a three-time winner of the Shamus Award, Reed Farrel Coleman is an adjunct instructor of English at Hofstra University.)

“I guess God made Boston on a wet Sunday,” Raymond Chandler once said, and this seemingly tossed-off remark has much to teach us about the gentle arts of setting and description. This class will guide you through the process and potential pitfalls of choosing a setting, and explore the ways in which descriptive passages can be honed to illuminate characters and themes.

12:30 – 1:30 PM: Lunch Break – Box Lunch

1:30: - 2:30 PM Character

Teacher: **Charlaine Harris** (Charlaine Harris has been a professional writer for 32 yrs.)

From Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple to Walter Mosley’s Easy Rawlins, character is arguably the most memorable element of a mystery novel and a series. How do you create a full-realized unique protagonist that leaps from the page? How should you develop secondary characters as well as the protagonist’s nemesis? This class will challenge you to eliminate cardboard characterizations and create something new and fresh.

2:45 – 3:45 PM Writing as Re-Writing

Teacher: **Daniel Stashower** (Daniel Stashower is a two-time Edgar award winner, and a recipient of the Raymond Chandler Fulbright Fellowship in Detective and Crime Fiction Writing.)

If editing was good enough for William Shakespeare, it’s good enough for you. More often than not, it’s the things you remove, the tweaks you make, and the tinkering you do, that are the difference between another slush pile manuscript and a new book contract. There are some easy methods to learn and follow to help you develop an editorial ear. Give us sixty minutes and we’ll give you a better chance with agents and editors.

4:00 – 5:00 PM: The Writing Life

Teacher: **Hank Phillippi Ryan** (Winner of the 2013 Mary Higgins Clark Award as well as two Agathas, the Anthony and the Macavity, Boston TV reporter Hank Phillippi Ryan has won 30 Emmys for her investigative journalism.)

"I write when I'm inspired, and I see to it that I'm inspired at nine o'clock every morning." That's how Peter DeVries balanced art and craft. What's the reality of the writing life? The journey from your great idea to 90,000 words will mean hours of solitude. Days of self-doubt. Revision. Rejection. And then--rejoicing. You'll often say: "I wish someone had explained this to me!" In this class, they will.

COST: \$50 for both members and non-members of Mystery Writers of America. You must register by Thursday, December 4, 2013. If you need to cancel, there will be no refunds after December 4th. Registration is limited to 115 people.

We have also arranged for a small room block at the hotel – the rate of \$189/night is available for the nights of December 13 – 14, 2013. The reservation must be made by November 14, 2013.

Click on this link to make your [hotel reservation](#)

Here is a link to a map of the area: <http://goo.gl/maps/ayRij>

Click here for the [MWA U – Dallas 2013 Registration Form](#)

To pay via the MWA Store, click here: <http://mysterywriters.org/store/products/mwa-u-dallas>

For questions about MWA-U, email: mwa@mysterywriters.org

Austin's Rooster Teeth: A New-Media Company in the Traditional Storytelling Business

By L. A. Starks & Bill Dannenmaier

We attended the RTX (Rooster Teeth) conference in Austin, TX and saw parallels in this new-media company for book authors. Rooster Teeth produces YouTube podcasts and videos that routinely get millions of views.

Like Bouchercon and Thrillerfest, RTX is a several-days celebration of its stars and fans. In a trajectory similar to Austin's South by Southwest (SXSW), RTX conference attendance has grown from a few hundred attendees in an open field in 2011 to a few thousand in 2012 to eight thousand this year. Indeed, one concern is whether the Austin Convention Center will be large enough for next year's RTX conference. So it's no surprise we stood in line two hours to register and ninety minutes or more for each panel we attended.

Rooster Teeth takes its name as a genteel euphemism for "cock bite." It began eleven years ago with a few guys uploading videos and commentary on their gaming. Even today, its slogan is "Where Gaming Meets the Internet." Rooster Teeth is similar to commercialized fan fiction but with gamers as the company's main writers and producers. It has grown to over forty people, including several with experience programming for the University of Texas television station.

Like all good storytellers, Rooster Teeth podcast writers created characters with which fans identify, even if some of the characters start simply as different-colored space soldiers (Red vs. Blue). The color differentiation carries over to its newest animated series, RWBY (pronounced "Ruby"). Every author recognizes the idea behind four introductory RWBY trailers designed to introduce the main characters—all female.

Many Rooster Teeth success factors resemble those for book authors: multiple lines, branding, worldwide reach, and interaction with fans.

A question book authors should ask is "What's the day job? Where's the revenue to support over forty people?" The answer: merchandise sales, sponsorships, tie-ins and advertising from gaming and media companies, and production of (unrelated) advertising videos. Note that one of Rooster Teeth's first corporate sponsors interested in reaching its large, young market was Audible.com, the audiobook company owned by Amazon.

There are obviously differences between Rooster Teeth and traditional mystery writing. Rooster Teeth is a production company, more like a publisher than an individual author. It has a group of programs: Red vs. Blue, Achievement Hunter, Slo-Mo Guys, RWBY, and others. The company started its videos with a built-in potential fan base of Microsoft Halo gamers because its first videos were stories of simple Halo soldiers. This successful concept is continuing into its eleventh season but is refreshed periodically with—wait for it—new head *writers*.

Bill Dannenmaier is a Rooster Teeth fan and expert. L. A. Starks' second book, STRIKE PRICE, was published May 2013 by L&L Dreamspell in a limited print edition. Both of her books are slated for e-book publication by StoneThread Publishing. 13 DAYS: THE PYTHAGORAS CONSPIRACY has just been released and STRIKE PRICE will be released in early 2014.

**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
SOUTHWEST CHAPTER OF MWA**

Sleuth Sayer

c/o Laura Elvebak
5837 Village Forest Ct.
Houston, TX 77092



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