



THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY ROSE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY ROSE, RWA® CHAPTER #52

SVR WELCOMES

Sherrilyn Kenyon

NY TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

BY A.J. STEWART

As writers, we're often asked where we come up with the ideas for our books. No doubt SVR's guest speaker gets that question a lot. It's not every writer who can span the genres of Sci-Fi, Romance, Fantasy, Horror, Contemporary, Historical, Romantic Suspense, Futuristic, Urban Fantasy, High Fantasy and Time Travel. And, she isn't slowing down at all. To find an expert in the art of world building, look no further than Sherrilyn Kenyon.



Sherrilyn Kenyon

As the author of the hugely popular and ground-breaking Dark Hunter series, as well as The League, she has built an incredibly large readership, one that continues to grow with each new release. Under the pseudonym Kinley MacGregor, she writes of the Lords of Avalon, a new take on the Camelot legend. With over 10 million books in print in over 26

KENYON Continued on page 3

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ARE YOU A "WORD" PERSON OR A "STORY" PERSON?

Phyllis Humphrey Will Help You Decide

Saturday, February 24

Ever asked yourself that question? Better yet, what is the difference between a "word" or "story" person? According to our speaker, Phyllis Humphrey, it's the difference between music and lyrics. Word people have a fine grasp of language, choose interesting adjectives and verbs, outstanding images, and unusual similes and metaphors. Story people, on the other

HUMPHREY Continued on page 3

MEETING PARTICULARS

WHEN

Saturday, Jan. 27, 2007
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
9:30 a.m. check-in

PRICE

\$25.00 — Members
\$30 — Guests
(\$25 at the door)

WHERE

Holiday Inn Sacramento Northeast
in the Liberty Room
(See directions at right)

WHEN

Saturday, Feb. 24, 2007
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
9:30 a.m. check-in

WHERE

University Club House
(See directions at right)

PRICE

\$20.00 — Members
\$25 — Guests
(\$25 at the door)

RSVP at least one week prior to the meeting

To Marlene Urso at:
(530) 644-4204 (hm)
or мурso@innercite.com

SVR has hired a caterer for our luncheons. We will serve both regular and vegetarian fare. If you will not be staying for lunch, but plan on attending the meeting, please let Marlene know. A meeting-only charge will be assessed at the door.

A WORD OR TWO FROM THE PREZ

A Brand New Year

BY SARAH PALMERO

Sacramento Valley Rose President



Welcome to 2007 and the start of a brand new year. Here's hoping that any troubles are behind us and only good times and good news ahead.

I'm looking forward to this term as president, though it's not my first. Like a lot of things in life, we often wish for the chance to do things over and, lucky me, I get a shot with the chapter and with all of you.

We've got a great schedule of speakers lined up for you, starting with Sherrilyn Kenyon this month. We've got agents, we've got a retreat and our annual three-page read. We're going to do a lot of hands-on work, along with the usual discussing and suggesting and brainstorming. Hopefully that will get our brains going and keep us motivated throughout the year.

And to help us all stay connected and enthusiastic, we'll have a brand new website to showcase all our hard work and accomplishments.

Here's to a great start!

DIRECTIONS to the Holiday Inn

From Interstate 80 take the Madison Avenue exit. If you are heading North on I-80, stay in the left-most right-hand turn lane for Madison Avenue. If you are heading South on I-80, get in the left lane on Madison Avenue. Once on Madison Ave, turn left at the first light (Date Avenue). The Holiday Inn is at the end of Date Avenue.

The address is 5321 Date Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95841.

DIRECTIONS to the University Club House

From Highway 50: take the Howe Avenue/Power Inn Road exit. Head north on Howe (going South puts you on Power Inn). At the Swathmore signal light turn right (there is a turn pocket).**

From Business 80: take the Cal Expo exit east. Cal Expo Boulevard turns into Arden Way. Stay in the right-hand lane and turn right on Howe Avenue. Travel south past Fair Oaks Boulevard and American River Drive. The next signal is Swathmore, turn left.**

**This takes you into an office parking lot — you are not lost. Turn left at the yield sign, follow the road towards the tennis courts (watch out for the speed bumps) and park anywhere on the left side nearest the tennis courts. The clubhouse is down a small walkway.

MEMBER CONGRATULATIONS

- ❖ **BARBARA MCMAHON** has made another sale to Harlequin Superromance with a book tentatively titled *CAITLIN'S COWBOY*. It is scheduled for a Spring 2008 release.
- ❖ All three of **BRENDA NOVAK'S** 2005 releases finaled in the Laurel Wreath. *STRANGER IN TOWN* took first place in the long contemporary, *BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY* took second, and *EVERY WAKING MOMENT* took third in the romantic suspense category.
- ❖ **MARLENE URSO** placed second in the unpublished category in the Wallflower contest with her historical manuscript, *HERS TO LOVE*. **GINNY LESTER** placed third in the unpublished category in the Wallflower contest with her contemporary romance manuscript, *EMMY AND THE COWBOY*. She also received the overall high point plaque. **DEBORAH JULIENNE** placed second in the unpublished division of the Wallflower contest with her romantic suspense manuscript, *GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT*. She also received a request from an editor.
- ❖ **ANNA STEWART** recently finaled in the First Coast Romance Writers Beacon Contest in the unpublished division in short contemporary with *NEMESIS IN THE NIGHT*.
- ❖ **KAREN SANDLER** recently signed a two-book contract for Silhouette Special Edition.

KENYON, Continued Front Page

countries, Ms. Kenyon has hit not only the *NY Times* best-sellerlist, but also *USA Today's* and *Publishers Weekly*. With every new release she gains more fans, many of whom surf her website, which averages 120,000 hits a week (even more when her latest releases are due out). The website (www.sherrilynkenyon.com) offers everything from a list of appearances, to joining her "minion" fan club, to a shopping extravaganza of merchandise, proof positive she's not only prolific, she's an expert at marketing.

According to the biography page of her website, not only is she published in fiction, she has vast credits in non-fiction, including the invaluable reference book: *THE*

CHARACTER NAMING SOURCEBOOK. She's written numerous articles and short stories, which have appeared in journals and magazines worldwide. Once upon a time, she also wrote for television and radio and worked for a science fiction and fantasy editor.

Ms. Kenyon will be speaking on a variety of topics and will no doubt leave time for your questions. She will also be signing books at the meeting as well as at the Barnes and Noble at Arden Fair Saturday evening at 5:30 p.m. Reservations can be made through our events coordinator and details can be found on page 2. Hope to see you on the 27th!

HUMPHREY, Continued Front Page

hand, mark their work by action and dialogue: something is always happening. The successful writer, according to Ms. Humphrey, combines both these techniques, putting music and lyrics together to form a successful partnership of words.

This workshop will help us identify where each of us stands in the craft of writing and how, possibly, we can improve and perfect that talent we all struggle with. As the author of seven short contemporary romance novels, the most recent being *MASQUERADE* (Port Town Publishing), Ms. Humphrey has spent a good deal of time crafting her words. She's also a GH finalist and her romantic-suspense novel, *NORTH BY NORTHEAST*, won the San Diego Book award in 2002. This workshop was also published in *The*

Writer magazine in 2001. She's also written the article "Critique Groups: A Writer's Best Friend" that appeared in *San Diego Writers' Monthly*.

Among her other credits, she's sold several short stories, a nonfiction book entitled *WALL STREET ON \$20 A MONTH* and has contributed to magazines such as *Ms*, *Thin World*, *Savvy*, *Fact*, *Indianapolis*, *O-T-C Review*, *Campus Life*, *South Bay Accent* and others. She's also ghost-written three books and had two radio scripts produced by American Radio Theater.

Such a diverse writer is sure to bring some interesting information to SVR and hopefully give you some helpful hints on how to make your already stellar writing even better! Reservation information can be found inside the first page of the newsletter. Please come and join us!

WHAT YOU MISSED

BY A.J. STEWART

The World Of EMS

Let's face it. There are some jobs that take special people, dedicated people, and most of those professions are in the emergency-response field. On Saturday, November 18, 2006, SVR welcomed four emergency services professionals, all of whom were a wealth of information and had all of us rethinking the definition of hero.

Wendy Unmacht is a paramedic with American Medical Response and is the first to say it is not an easy job to have. With twelve-hour shifts, beginning at 6:30 a.m., most of her work day is spent in an ambulance... waiting. With a lot of down time, she manages to sneak in some reading, and while they might be able to run short errands during their shift, they are never without their gear, especially communication devices. Paramedics must be reachable at all times, no exceptions.

There is a difference between a paramedic and an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician). Where the latter requires an 8-week course, a paramedic must go through six months of education, plus actual working hours in an ambulance. It is the medical intervention that separates the two. Paramedics have more leeway when it comes to administering medications and making more serious decisions when caring for victims of accidents or crimes. Physical fitness is an absolute must as the demands made on the body can be extreme at times.

Niko King is a battalion chief with the Sacramento Fire Department. He's been with the department for twelve years, gradually promoted through the ranks and currently stands atop the fire ladder, so to speak. Just to get some numbers out there: Sacramento has 23 fire engines (those with pump hoses) and seven fire trucks (with ladders, rescue equipment, and the jaws of life).

Firefighters spend 33 percent of their lives in the firehouse, sharing chores and making this their home away from home. Their shifts run like this: 24 hours on, 24

hours off. Back for 24 hours. Off for 48 hours. Back on for 24 hours and then off for 4 days. They do a lot of cooking. At his station, there are 11 people on rotating shifts.

Of the 570 firefighters, 38-40 are female. Sacramento City Firefighter ratio is higher than most fire departments (yay, Sac!). They do have shared sleeping quarters, similar to dorm living, and have very close contact with one another.

Fire service attracts a lot of people and incorporates a number of different teams. From the hazardous material response to urban search and rescue teams (CA has 8 of the nation's 28). Many of our local firefighters responded to Oklahoma City and Ground Zero, as well as working off a boat in New Orleans after Katrina. Those sent to these types of sites have been specially trained (and must undergo new training every month) and have areas of specialties on their team.

A question from a member brought about the topic of the arson division, which is a separate entity from the fire division. They don't work in the firehouse, but do have 36-hour shifts. If any fire causes more than \$10,000 in damage, there is an automatic arson investigation (much, Nico said, like a crime scene investigation...the real kind, not the TV type). There is extensive documentation, and each city's investigation unit has its own set of police powers. Some have the power to carry firearms and execute arrests.

Physical fitness is a major, if not the most important factor, for any firefighter. They need to stay fit in order to keep up with the equipment and the job, and every firehouse has a workout room. They are required to pass frequent physical fitness tests and keep up a continuous fitness program. The academy training is 16 weeks long and includes learning about breathing apparatus, per-

EMS, Continued from Page 4

forming numerous fire drills, being tested while blindfolded and put into uncomfortable and uncontrolled (to a degree) environments.

Firefighters are a different breed of human. They go against normal intuition and instinct, actually entering burning buildings, and while they are reliant on training, their ability to detach from those natural survival instincts has helped them save hundreds of lives. Training is everything and is very similar to military training. They focus on solving the problem vs. surrendering to the fear of the situation. There is stress training and event counseling after traumatic events.

Despite it all, it's the continuous gratitude and thanks from the community that makes Niko King's job all the more rewarding.

Kathy Roberts, former SVR member, is a former training officer with Placer County Mounted Search and Rescue, a job where you never know when and where you'll be called to.

Calls typically come in between 2 and 3 a.m. and they must be organized, ready to go, and arrive at the staging area by dawn. From there they are told where to go by the Sheriff's department, fire department, or law enforcement. There is a time of investigation to learn what each person's skills are and where they will be most helpful. Needless to say, there's a lot of waiting time behind the scenes as they divide the search area into quadrants, with the majority of attention being placed on the last known place the person was seen.

Because horses can get into places vehicles can't, the mounted division can be very important to a successful search. Most searches are for hunters and overdue hikers. Searchers such as Kathy are there to do what's asked of them, not what they might want to do. A lot of time, they end up keeping perimeter control (keeping people back and away so others can do their job). The training for this job includes 90 – 100 hours; must be proficient in using maps and compasses, GPS training, low angle rescue and survival in the wild. They learn how to move a litter and rope.

As Kathy says, an effective searcher needs to know a little about everything. They are all volunteers and are below EMTs on the status chart. They cannot administer any kind of medication. Their horses must undergo extensive training as well. They're tested on their attitude and temperament. The horse and rider must work as a team and have absolute trust in one another to be successful. Horses are re-evaluated every year and can work up to 20 years (and even after they can be used in ways that are not as taxing).

Every search-and-rescue department is different and, like the arson investigators discussed previously, some have more police powers than others. Most search and rescues have a lot of volunteers because the county cannot afford to pay for a full unit.

Believe it or not, rescue searchers carry a bag the size of a fanny pack and must, within that pack, carry at least 3 days work of items. These contain everything from a first aid kit to granola bars, tea bags, and aid and comfort for the person they're on the search for. While on an actual search, the volunteers are on the lookout for both clues and the actual person. Broken branches, tracks, paper, clothing—they filter through the clues to get to the person. Often they're prepared to spend the night and leave only after they've been relieved and debriefed (either in writing or verbally).

Sergeant Hugh McGee is with the Sacramento Police Department. He began by telling us what is required to become a police officer here in Sacramento. It begins with 6 months in the training academy (a full 24 weeks). Each cadet must have at least an AA degree and be proficient in shooting, high pursuit driving, arrest control, custody of suspects, physical training, report writing. The day begins at 5:45 a.m. with a five-mile run.

Field training commences once academy training is complete. This training lasts a minimum of 6 months and if it goes longer than 9 months, it is suggested the job might not be right for this person. They rotate every month. With each phase (there are 3 phases of field training), they become more active on their job. By phase three, they are being monitored by field training officers.

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EMS, Continued from Page 5

Probation then lasts 18 months and during this time, the officer can be released from the job for cause (meaning for any reason).

The majority of calls are two-officer calls (two cars). GPS tracking and assistance from dispatch suggests what cars go where and from which district they're pulled (there are 6 districts in Sacramento). Missing persons are, sadly, typically runaways. Family disputes are common, as are homicides, but so are suspicious persons in the neighborhood.

There is not much down time for these officers. Their shifts are four 10-hour shifts followed by 3 days off, and seniority determines who gets the best shifts. They sign up for an entire year, and, for officers with families, they like the day shifts and weekends off (the busiest times). Swing shift, between 3 p.m. and 1 a.m. is the busiest, especially with family disputes. The majority of their calls are alcohol and drug related.

They spend a lot of time in their cars (no donuts... they prefer mochas and croissants, he jokes), and calls for service dictate lunch time. They have to be ready to go in an instant, even if they're in the middle of a meal.

There are many different jobs within the department: patrol, detective, narcotics, SID, vice (gambling and prostitution), canine units, school resources officers, bike unit (seen around the K Street mall), mounted unit, and the drunk wagon (typically a retirement job). The easiest area he says to work is downtown, and the most difficult is Del Paso and Oak Park, as they have more difficult issues to deal with. The neighborhood crime unit deals with robberies; Homicide, which has more training involved, is located in 3 stations in Sac. Investigative units are city-wide and each division has its own training requirements for each field.

In Sacramento there are about 100 detectives. From the chief on down, there are approximately 600 officers, with 200 officers on shift at any given time. There are 3 rotating shifts that divide between Natomas to Elk Grove and Watt to the Sacramento River.

The goal of the Sac PD is to have 40 percent of its

officers be female and they are on their way to meeting that goal. It takes exceptional women to do this job, and while there is a respect vs. rivalry issue, women are also better listeners. Since most of police work is using your brain, women are ideal for the job. Officers do carry tasers and mace along with their firearm and baton. Most do not carry secondary or back-up weapons. The weapon of choice is a .40 caliber Sig Sauer (German-made gun) since it has no external safety, firing only if the trigger is pulled. They all carry hand-held radios that are 800 MHz so they can talk to all agencies. The flatness of Sacramento aids in easy communication, but with the new high rises going up in the downtown area, they will be undergoing new training for new equipment as the buildings create massive interference.

The officer who arrives first at a murder scene typically contains the scene and preserves everything. This can include putting up the yellow crime-scene tape. A supervisor or lieutenant will be called and an investigator will narrow the scene down. The officer will continue directing personnel, monitor the scene and communicate information to the supervisor. The lag time between the officer's arrival and the arrival of his or her superior can be up to one hour, as a lot do not live in town but outside of Sacramento, such as in Elk Grove or El Dorado.

A lot of time is spent on report writing; it is a very unglamorous job and NO TV SHOW GETS IT RIGHT. Computers have been a great way to increase communication between agencies, especially between parole and probation offices, and dealing with the growing sex-offender registry.

I'm sure we've all gained a greater appreciation for the jobs these people do. They're the first to run into the fire, to look for the lost, to get those who need it medical attention and protect us every day. I offer them my personal thanks for doing the jobs that make this world a better place.

AJ Stewart is a two-time past president of SVR. She writes paranormal and contemporary romance and anxiously awaits her first publishing contract.

LIFE IN LIMBO LAND

BY CINDY MUNOZ

I'm a writer. I don't broadcast this fact too much because unfortunately, I am also one of those whose current writerly status is AYU, As Yet Unpublished (a designation coined by Ruth Kaufman in her RWA workshop on persistence).

Having to admit I'm AYU oftentimes elicits looks of sympathy and pity from those writers who have reached the exalted heights of Published.

From non-writers, the reaction is usually less positive, often downright derisive. After all, anybody can claim to be a writer. Being published legitimizes the claim. Sadly, AYU is not a fun place to be. I've come to think of it like limbo, that uncertain place of waiting, not the dance.

Writers who are trying to reach that shining bright goal of publication but haven't, are stuck in Limbo Land.

There are far worse places of course, and fortunately I'm not here alone. Still, I wonder how I ended up in this frustrating, gray expanse of nothing. And more importantly, when will I get out?

I know I'm doing everything right. I belong to several professional organizations, and I stay abreast of what's happening in the publishing business. I've honed my craft and continue to work on it everyday. I have two complete manuscripts and am working on a third.

I'm a good writer. Not only do my critique partners

say so, but I've also finaled in a couple of prestigious contests. I've even managed to snag representation with an agent who has been in the business over twenty years and is enthusiastic about submitting my work. I'm on the right road out of Limbo Land; I just haven't made it yet.

And some days it feels like I never will. Those are the days when writing becomes a hopeless Sisyphean slog with piles of rejections the only things I can see around me.

Other days, I step into the bookstore, cruise the Net, or flip through a review magazine and it seems like everyone in the world has a book out except me.

Then there are the days when I hear of another writer who has received "the call" and is winging out of Limbo Land into the realm of Published.

Those days are two-edged because, on the one hand I truly am happy that someone has made it, and if that person can, then so can I.

But on the other hand lies the Limbo Land morass of self-pity. Why am I still here? When will I get out? How much longer can I stand it?

Once my pity party of chocolate and caffeine is over, the only thing I can do is keep writing. Trust that my agent is putting my work in front of the right people. Believe my writing and non-writing friends when they tell me, "It's just a matter of time."

I can see the Promised Land of Publication on the horizon and I'm determined to get there. I won't be in Limbo Land forever.

Words Of Wisdom

Never Give Up—Never Surrender!

—Jason Nesmith (Cmdr. Peter Quincy Taggart)

—Galaxy Quest

JANUARY MEMBER RELEASES



ALLISON BRENNAN, SPEAK NO EVIL, Ballantine, January 2007

Don't say a word . . . Just scream.

The murder of eighteen-year-old Angie Vance was exceptionally vile—her mouth was sealed with glue, an obscenity was scrawled across her skin and she was suffocated in a garbage bag. The killing seems personal, so police detective Carina Kincaid focuses her efforts on the victim's much older ex-boyfriend, Steve Thomas. But without physical evidence, Carina can't make a collar or a case. She also can't stop Sheriff Nick Thomas, the prime suspect's brother, from conducting his own unwelcome investigation.

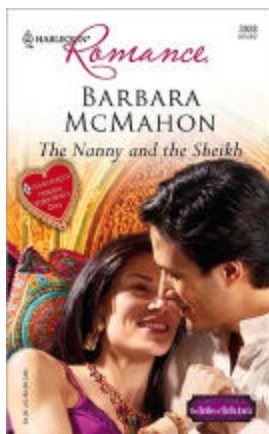
Though Nick is still scarred and unsteady from a recent confrontation with a serial killer, he's determined to prove his brother's innocence. But his confidence is shaken when he learns of Steve's dark side, and when a friend of the murdered girl meets a similarly gruesome fate. With no time to lose, Carina and Nick work together to trap a psychopath, before another unlucky woman faces an unspeakable end.



CANDY CALVERT, AYE DO OR DIE, Midnight Ink, February 2007

Darcy Cavanaugh zips herself into Retro polka dots and sails under the Golden Gate to be a bridesmaid for a fellow nurse--and to put a lot of nautical miles between herself and a certain hive-inducing velvet jewelry box. Was that really an engagement ring she saw hidden under a stack of her boyfriend's boxer shorts? Darcy's certain she's genetically programmed for relationship failure, especially after last year's humiliating disaster with Firefighter Sam.

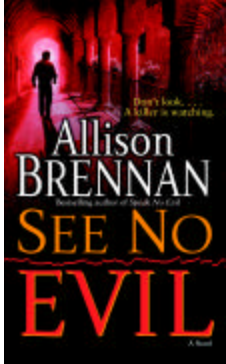
The "booze cruise," with its rowdy entourage of Traveler Nurses and practical joking firefighters, gives Darcy time to think about the impending proposal as well as a respite from the annoying reality that she's been the target of a poet stalker. And then suddenly Firefighter Sam climbs the gangway; a poem is taped to her cabin door . . . and someone tries to murder the groomsmen one by one.



BARBARA MCMAHON, THE NANNY AND THE SHEIKH, Harlequin Romance, Series: Brides of Bella Lucia, January 2007

Melissa Fox's trip to the kingdom of Qu'Arim is a perk of her job with the Valentine family. When she arrives, she works for Bella Lucia, but when she expertly calms Sheikh Surim Al-Thani's three little children, the handsome sheikh is determined she will stay on as his nanny. When Melissa realizes how much the children need her, she agrees to stay—she will teach the gorgeous but guarded sheikh how to love and care for them. Only she finds herself in love with a man she could only ever dream of marrying.

FEBRUARY MEMBER RELEASES

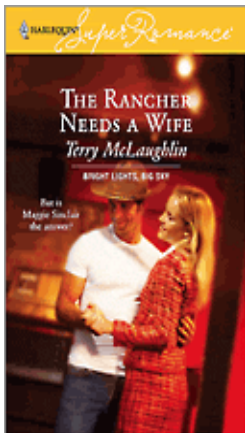


ALLISON BRENNAN, *SEE NO EVIL*, Ballantine, February 2007

Don't look . . . A killer is watching.

A troubled teenage girl has been charged with the grisly murder of her stepfather. The evidence is damning: Emily was found alone at the scene with blood on her hands, and an incriminating e-mail she wrote outlines a murder plot identical to the method of the brutal slaying. But deputy district attorney Julia Chandler believes her niece is innocent, and she's determined to keep the promise she made to protect her dead brother's daughter—even if it means hiring private eye Connor Kincaid . . . the man who blames her for forcing his resignation from the police department.

Together Julia and Connor uncover a chain of unsolved violent crimes tied to an unorthodox therapist whose anonymous online patients purge their anger by posting lethal fantasies. But someone in the group has turned vigilante, turning the game of virtual murder into a flesh-and-blood vendetta.

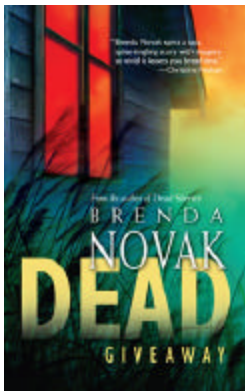


TERRY MCLAUGHLIN, *THE RANCHER NEEDS A WIFE*, Harlequin Superromance, Series: *Bright Lights, Big City*, February 2007

After his divorce, Wayne Hammond hesitated to make anyone the second Mrs. Hammond. Topping the list of the women he shouldn't pick is Maggie Harrison Sinclair.

Maggie has already left Tucker, Montana, once. She's back only to lick her wounds and figure out her next step. Not exactly the ranch-loving, stay-at-home wife and mother that Wayne has always wanted.

But once Wayne and Maggie cross paths, the impossible-to-resist rancher and the bright-lights-loving woman succumb to their hotter-than-heck attraction, resulting in an even bigger complication....



BRENDA NOVAK, *DEAD GIVEAWAY*, MIRA, February 2007

The Reverend Lee Barker went missing nineteen years ago....

And the people of Stillwater, Mississippi believe they know why. They're convinced he was murdered--by his stepson, Clay Montgomery. But only Clay--and his mother and sisters--can say for sure. They were the only ones there that fateful night, the only ones who know what really happened. And they're not talking.

Allie McCormick is a cold case detective from Chicago. After a particularly difficult divorce, she's returned to Stillwater with her six-year-old daughter to find the peace she once knew in her hometown, and to work for the local police force while she's starting over. But when Clay's powerful enemies join forces to put him behind bars, Allie feels duty-bound to uncover the truth. Her instincts tell her he didn't murder the Reverend Lee Barker.

Maybe Clay's a dark and brooding man with more than his share of secrets, but he was just sixteen at the time. And he's not a cold-blooded killer. At least that's what Allie believes--until she finds proof that behind the preacher's pious demeanor lurked the heart of a monster.

Then she has to ask herself whether justice has already been done....

Minding Your Mannerisms: Is Your Character Lying?

BY COLLEEN COLLINS

We all know the edict of “show, don’t tell” in our writing. When it comes to showing a character who’s hiding the truth, how many of us have shown this by giving the character mannerisms we’ve read or heard are sure-fire lying behaviors, such as clearing their throats, touching their noses, averting their gazes. Guess what? Recent studies have shown liars don’t clear their throats or touch their noses or shift around any more than truth tellers do.

In fact, curtailing their movements may be a by-product of trying to remember what they’ve said to keep their stories straight. So, let’s talk about some new mannerisms a shifty, torn, gullible, or maybe downright evil fictional character might do to hide their secrets by looking at some studies with real people.

For starters, it seems many of us who pride ourselves on having great bullshit detectors have been kidding ourselves. They exist in our imaginations only. Over the past decade, Maureen O’Sullivan of San Francisco State has done truth-telling studies on more than 13,000 people from all walks of life, including therapists, police officers, law students, artists, and dispute mediators.

Of these groups, only 15 people were deemed highly skilled human lie detectors (about 0.1 percent). What makes these people exceptional lie detectors?

“All of them pay attention to nonverbal cues and the nuances of word usages and apply them differently to different people,” she says.

O’Sullivan compares these skillful observers to Agatha Christie’s fictional Miss Marple, who could instantly judge the veracity of someone by comparing him or her to people she’d already encountered.

This corroborates with studies by Aldert Vrij of the University of Portsmouth in England, who has studied lies told by suspects in police interrogation rooms. Vrij obtained police-recorded videotapes in which 16 suspects in the United Kingdom, charged with offenses such as

arson and murder, told both lies and truths about their alleged involvement in the crimes. The police used forensic evidence, witness accounts, and the suspects’ eventual confessions to determine the actual events. Before learning the police conclusions, Vrij’s team analyzed the videotapes for signs of the suspects’ nonverbal reactions to questioning, such as gaze aversion, blinking, and hand-and-arm movements. They also looked at verbal cues, such as pauses in speech and speech disturbances, including “ahs,” stutters, and incomplete sentences.

But guess what? The only general difference Vrij found between liars and truth tellers is that the liars blinked less frequently and paused longer while speaking. Seems these longer pauses are preventative means to avoid speech errors and backtracking to fill in forgotten or incorrect details.

“Their [liars] stories are too good to be true,” says Bella DePaulo of the University of California, Santa Barbara, who has written several reviews of the field of deception research.

Liars may also feel fear and guilt or delight at fooling people. According to Paul Ekman, a retired psychologist from the University of California, San Francisco, such emotions can trigger a change in facial expression so brief that most observers never notice. He terms these split-second phenomena “microexpressions” and that these emotional clues are as important as gestures, voice, and speech patterns in uncovering deceitfulness.

Interesting. Might be fun to develop a character who takes great delight in misleading people by lying, or perhaps indulges a risk-taking behavior by lying to see what he/she can get away with. And then there are the studies that claim liars’ voices become more tense or high-pitched.

This approach is the foundation of voice stress analysis (VSA), which is widely used by law enforcement and insurance-fraud investigators.

MANNERISMS, Continued from page 10

So, let's review some of these recently studied mannerisms you might use to describe a character who's lying:

- * Liars blink less frequently and pause longer while speaking.
- * Liars' stories are too good to be true.
- * Liars (either due to their fear, guilt, or delight at fooling people) show fleeting changes in their facial expressions that are as important as gestures, voice, and speech patterns in uncovering deceitfulness.

* A liar's voice becomes more tense or high-pitched.

Maybe the next time you have a character who's ready to fib, cover up something, or launch into the biggest fish story since the beginning of time, one of these techniques will do the trick.

Would I lie to you?

Colleen Collins's current release is *A SCENT OF SEDUCTION* (Harlequin Blaze, November 2006). She and her business partner also teach Writing PIs in Novels, <http://www.writingprivateinvestigators.com/>. To read more about her upcoming books, go to <http://www.colleencollins.net/>. And that's the truth!



DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER
SUBMISSIONS IS THE 5TH OF THE MONTH.

Thanks!

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Way To Go, Rosers!

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HISTORY HOYDENS: Love history and romance? Check out the History Hoydens, a bunch of historical authors (including SVR member Kathryn Dennis) who've just launched a blog.

Check it out at: <http://historyhoydens.blogspot.com>

COOL PRIZE OPPORTUNITY: Brenda Novak is giving away a conference registration to the next RT BOOKclub convention in conjunction with the release of her new book. For details and how to enter, go to www.brendanovak.com

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SAVE THE DATES:

January 27—Sherrilyn Kenyon, NY Times bestseller
February 24—Phyllis Humphrey, Word or Story

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