

# THE MYST-ERIE BLOTTER



December 2015/January 2016  
Volume 1, Issue 10

# Letter from the Editor

Seasons Greetings Sisters, Misters, and Mystery Lovers:

It's hard to believe that we're already here. Every year, I swear up and down that I will not let Christmas get the best of me. I'm going to be prepared and start shopping in October. The tree will be up the day after Thanksgiving and I will remember to buy a wreath for my door. This is going to be the year...next year...I swear. Yes...2016 will be "the year that stuff gets done," cross my heart.

Which leads me to...procrastination...

A few weeks back, while trying to find anything to do but work on my book, I was reading this great article on procrastination and writer's block. It had a list of why writers procrastinate and how to fix it. It was really a great article, but maybe we better talk about it later.

New Years Resolutions. Who has 'em? I know this time of year brings out the resolutions in me...plans for writing, working out...quitting that pesky smoking habit...no donuts for 73 days. Ok...just kidding. I wouldn't actually quit eating donuts for 73 days. That's just absurd.

But in all seriousness, humans have a thing with numbers. January 1, the place marker of all place markers. We can always start anything we want any day at any time, but most of us like to save things for this special day when time starts over and you eat pork chops for some reason. So, what is your resolution? Do you resolve to finish that manuscript? To read 60 books in 60 days? Learn Chinese and how to scuba dive? You know what comes next. I want to know about it. Email me and tell me what your resolutions are for 2016 and I'll share it in the next issue of *The Myst-Erie Blotter*.

In the meantime, I wish you a very happy holiday...whatever it is that you celebrate. May this season bring you happiness and joy...squishy feelings about loved ones and all the cookies your stomach can handle. Or fictitious murder and mayhem. Whichever you prefer.

Until next time...Happy Writing!...and Reading!

*Yours Truly,  
Paula Corrao*



# Mark Your Calendar

*Next Meeting*

**Tuesday, January 12  
7 p.m. at Twinsburg Library**

*This is the annual business meeting and election of officers.*

***Special Event!***

**Death March**

**Saturday, March 12**

**Cuyahoga County Public**

**Library Writing Center**

**South Euclid, Ohio**

**9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**



## **Flexible Scheduling**

Our scheduling system revolves around on availability of space, speakers and demonstrations. Our intent is to have a meeting each month, generally around the second week of the month, though the date, time and location may vary. We hope the flexible scheduling will give us more options for interesting and helpful presentations and enable more members to take advantage of these opportunities and resources.

# What's Everyone Up To?

Casey Daniels

## Casey Daniels announces sale of two new books!



Pepper Martin Mystery #10, tentatively titled *Graveyard Shift*, will be published by Severn House in the UK in August of 2016 and in the U.S. in the fall of next year. Pepper's back to her old tricks, working as community relations director for a historic Cleveland cemetery and solving mysteries for the ghosts there. This time, she's teaming up with the ghost of Eliot Ness, and they're locking horns with notorious (and very dead) gangster Al Capone.

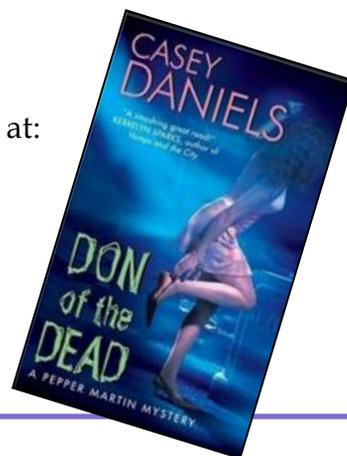
Casey has also sold a historical mystery to the same publisher with the tentative title, *Miss Barnum and the Feejee Mermaid Murders*. The book is set in New York in the 1840s and revolves around PT Barnum's American Museum and his sister, Evangeline, who works at the museum where historical artifacts are displayed alongside the people Barnum called "human oddities" and the weird and macabre artifacts he collected from all over the world. When one of Evangeline's friends is killed at the museum, she's drawn into a world of intrigue that takes her from the glittering drawing rooms of the city's elite to the dark alleys of tenements teeming with immigrants, and to the docks where traders bring in cargo--and shanghai the unsuspecting. There is no set publication date on "Miss Barnum" as of yet.

Both books will be published under the Casey Daniels name.

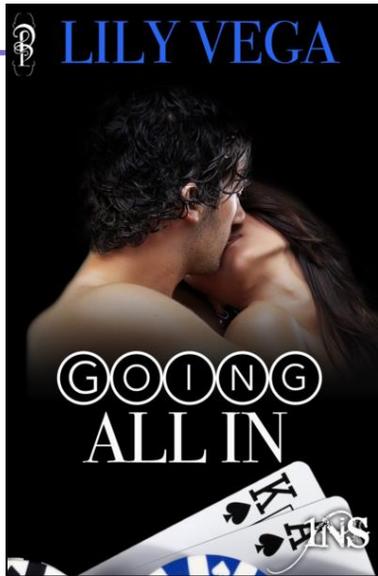
For a full listing of Casey Daniels titles, check out her website at:

<http://www.caseydaniels.com/>

Haven't read the Pepper Martin series? No time like the present to start with the first book!  
Pick up a copy of *Don of the Dead*!



# What's Everyone Up To?



Lily Vega

Lily Vega's book, *Going All In* (1Night Stand), came in second place in the Oklahoma Romance Writer's short erotic category of the International Digital Awards Contest.

For more information on the International Digital Awards and the winners, check out: <http://okrwa.com/contests/international-digital-awards/winners/>

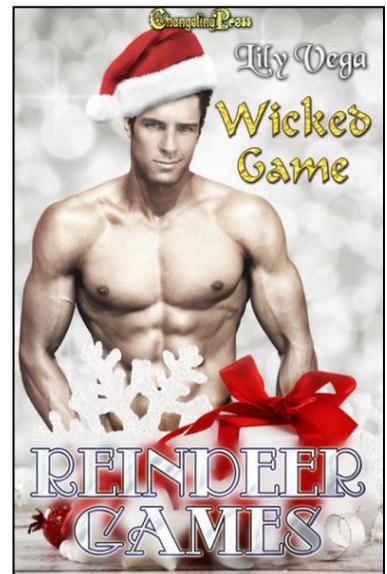
Also, she has a new release: *Wicked Game* (Reindeer Games).

*All's fair in love and war when the Reindeer Games are in play!*

*Santa didn't give bad boy Elf Brody his Christmas wish. Instead of sexy Beryl, he's stuck with goody-goody Holly for a partner. But Brody discovers the best gifts aren't always wrapped in the fanciest paper and Holly is so sweet, she melts on his tongue.*

For more info on this title, check out:

<https://www.changelingpress.com/product.php?&u pt=book&ubid=2440>



Do you have a book coming out? Won an award recently? Have exciting news to share with other writers and fans? Email [paula.corrao@yahoo.com](mailto:paula.corrao@yahoo.com) today!

# A Visit From an Arson Inspector

By Gloria Alden

Reprinted from <http://writerswhokill.blogspot.com/2015/11/a-visit-from-arson-inspector.html>

In November our Sisters in Crime chapter NEOSinC had a visit from Captain Deberra Schroeder. She's the only female fire captain in the Cleveland Fire Department, and was one of the first ten women firefighters hired in Cleveland. By the way, she said all of them should be called firefighters and not firemen no matter what the sex. As an arson investigator, Captain Schroeder is both a Cleveland Firefighter and a Cleveland Police Officer. We found Debbie not only very informative, but someone with a sense of humor, and willing to answer almost all of our questions, being careful not to give us details about any ongoing investigations.



There have been 440 fires investigated so far this year. Although, she's the captain now, she still sometimes goes out to investigate when needed. The first thing to check is O&C - origin and cause.

She listens to all the messages between the first responders and then talks to the occupants and anyone who has to leave. If someone has been seriously injured, she goes to the hospital first for his or her statement. It's also important to write good run reports and sheets. After they investigate for arson, and decide it is, the Crime Stoppers are called in. I assume they are criminal investigators.

She told about a case when she wasn't yet a captain, and she was with her boss. They went upstairs in a burning building checking for anyone in there and then headed for the attic which was not very big. She was on a ladder chopping holes in the wall. It was hot, and she was breathing in smoke, and was afraid. She wanted to turn around and leave, but she couldn't leave her partner to go up there alone. I don't remember if she said the fire had gotten up there or not, but she was so relieved to finally leave that area and get back outside. Her boss commended her for sticking with him and not leaving.



Another fire she told us a little about was a large fire in downtown Cleveland in a tall apartment building over a restaurant. The fire had started in the 8th floor penthouse apartment. Fortunately, no one was at home in the apartment where it started, and not one of the fifty-five occupants in the forty-two units was injured although they were affected by the fire. They had no sprinkler systems in any of the apartments. She suggested that we Google 150 Prospect Fire in Cleveland to learn more about it, which I did to get the picture of it. What an incredibly scary fire that

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was. I not only found pictures, I watched videos of it. The fire was under investigation, but I don't know if it still is. Any apartment building arson fire is labeled an aggravated arson. So far this year there have been twenty-one cases of aggravated arson in the Cleveland area.

She said many arsonists are stupid. For instance, the investigators check the gas stations closest to the house that had been set afire. A recent one had video surveillance of a guy, she called Smokey, filling up a gallon jug of gasoline, and he went inside to pay for it. The jug was found outside the house where he burned the apartment with a body in it. Needless, to say, he was caught.

Because we are writers, one of our members asked her to describe what the smell would be like and what would it sound like. She said that house fires generally smell like a campfire, but a car fire smells nastier like burning plastic and rubber. A house fire sounds like a freight train.

She ended the evening telling us how she was recently the victim of an attempted carjacking at a local grocery store parking lot. She'd just left the grocery store and was heading to the gas station in the same parking area. She was talking on her phone and just creeping along, and then stopped to finish her call before heading into the gas station to get gas. She'd just hung up when the passenger door opened and a masked guy in a hoodie was pointing his gun at her. He demanded she give him her keys and her phone or he'd shoot her. She told us all the things that went through her head in those few brief moments with a guy threatening her with a gun. She'd miss her grandchildren's birthdays coming up. Her husband would never find all her paper work. Her gun was in her purse behind her seat, and she couldn't reach it. Then her police mode kicked in. She reached her left arm down beside her seat, and then turned to him pointing a finger at him shouting "Police! Police! I have a gun, too!" in her loudest police officer's voice. The guy turned and ran away. She followed him with her Jeep to see where he'd go while calling 911 for police backup. The guy joined another guy and they headed down a drive beside a bank across the road and were gone by the time the police got there.

Several days later, they carjacked another car belonging to an elderly woman. She tossed them the key fob, but not her keys, grabbed her purse and ran. They were caught several days later. Debbie shakes her head and says most crooks are stupid.

Have you ever witnessed a house or apartment fire?

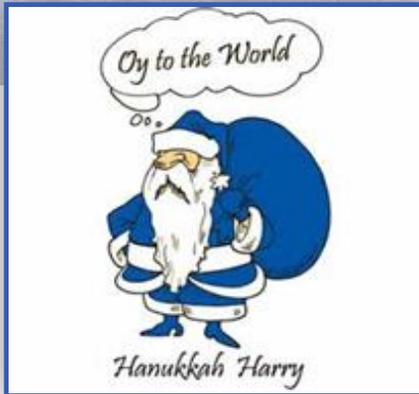
Have you ever been a victim of a robbery or a carjacking?

*Gloria blogs every Thursday at <http://writerswhokill.blogspot.com/2015/11/a-visit-from-arson-inspector.html>*

# Like Whatever

A monthly column on Anything Mystery Writing or Crime Related or, you know, whatever...

By T.K. Starr



## *Holy Latkes and Mistletoe, Batman - Another Season is Upon Us - Put Up the Christmas Tree and Plug In the Menorah!!*

Ah. Childhood holiday memories. They seem to get more nostalgic and rosier each year. I'm sure there were burnt dinners and sibling squabbles, but I have conveniently pushed anything negative to the foggy corners of my mind. One of the most endearing images is the annual Christmas cookie bake with my brother in which we'd sculpt hundreds of treats mixing old favorites with the new ones we carefully chose each year. It would take us all day and sometimes all night. The kitchen would smell of cinnamon and chocolate, toasted pecans and caramel. The results were masterpieces, at least to my child's eye, and we'd gift them or eat them for days. We've still tried to keep up the tradition when we can get together, but the marathon cookie bashes of yesteryear have mellowed to 5K cookie walks complete with good glasses of wine and a tad less fanaticism. We manage a few dozen treats now, not the hundreds of youth. Still masterpieces though! ☺

As for decking the halls, our Christmas tree was up soon after Thanksgiving when one of us, usually me, shimmied up to the attic and dragged down the family supply of lights (working and not), glass bulbs (some having mysteriously broken while being stored), and the old trusty-rusty tree stand. Putting up the tree was fun, especially as we usually had to do it multiple times because one of the cats would jump and pull on the ornaments, taking the tree down too. We thought it was funny, mom, not so much! I also made sure I never missed *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* or the original B/W version of *A Christmas Carol* since in those days, with no VHS, DVDs or DVR, if you missed it, you had to wait until next year!

And don't forget Hanukkah. Though the dates would vary depending on the particularities of the Hebrew calendar, Hanukkah always spanned the same general time, whether early or late December. The teal green pillars of the family Menorah stood out nicely against the lovely '70's orange Formica of the kitchen counter. The colorful candles were both a homage to my father's ancient heritage and his acceptance of mom's need for the Christmases her poor orphaned childhood had not let her enjoy (my mom the shiksah converted ☺). It was a true American "Festivus," at least as I remember it.

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Perhaps because of this mixed background, I've always seen the holiday season in its broader sense. A time for family, friends, great food and fun. A time also for reflection, gratitude and giving. It's the season of renewal with the promise of a new year and new hope ahead. Even as a child, I found no conflict between lighting the Hanukkah candles (for Dad) or putting up a Christmas tree (for mom). I went to Christmas mass with my BFF who was Catholic and loved both the beautiful and fun Christmas carols. Yet, I played the Dreidel game and hummed along to the Dreidel song (please don't make me sing it). I'd make sugar cookie cut-outs of Menorahs and Dreidels as well as Santa Clauses and Christmas Trees. Equal opportunity baking! In any event, I have come to love this time of year despite the now blatant commercialism (of which I am a willing participant) and "creepism" when not even Black Friday is actually on Friday anymore (again, I'm guilty).

So, here's to memories of yesterday and the belief in more wonderful memories of tomorrow. While the current reality does not seem to realize this is supposed to be the season of peace, love, and brother/sisterhood, I still plan for my part, to make merry and be appreciative and try with my simplistic self to be a better person and make a small difference. Maybe by just being kinder or more patient. Maybe by just leaving the last cookie for someone else. Hey, it's a start.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to get back to supporting the economy. There's an Amazon Lightening Deal that's just about to end. Thank goodness for 2-Day Prime shipping. Oy, Whatever.

**Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Healthy, Hopeful  
and "Wickedly Written" 2016 !!!**

# December

## Birthdays:

December 4 - Anne Carroll George  
December 5 - James Lee Burke  
December 8 - Ann Coulter  
December 24 - Mary Higgins Clark

December 1, 1835

Danish author, Hans Christian Andersen publishes first book of fairy tales.

His stories have been translated into more than 125 languages and have inspired hundreds of plays, movies and ballet.

December 19, 1843

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is first published.

*A Christmas Carol* has been adapted into film more than 56 times, including variations of the original such as *Scrooged* starring Bill Murray



December 8, 1609

Biblioteca Ambrosiana, the second public library of Europe, opens its reading room in Milan, Italy.



December is:

National Read A Book Month, Human Rights Month, Calendar Awareness Month, National Fruit Cake Month

Check It  
Out!!!

Did you  
know...?

[www.coffeehousemystery.com](http://www.coffeehousemystery.com)

If you love coffee, mystery and pastry, check out Cleo Coyle's virtual coffeehouse. You enjoy more info on the Coffeehouse Mystery series, fun recipes and more!

...the following books were written in roughly 3 weeks time?!

*A Study in Scarlet*  
by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
(the first Sherlock Holmes Mystery)

*On the Road*  
by Jack Kerouac

*The Gambler*  
by Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky

Want to share your blog or website? Send an email to the editor!  
[paula.corrao@yahoo.com](mailto:paula.corrao@yahoo.com)

“Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.”

~ Scott Adams

Creator of the Dilbert comic strip

## Who's Who and What's Where

President – Irma Baker  
Vice President – Jane Turzillo  
Treasurer – Kim Hammond  
Secretary – Amanda Flower  
Library Liaison – Cari Dubiel  
Newsletter Editor – Paula Corrao



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