



## BOOKSELLERS

1323 S. Rangeline Rd  
(in the Carmel Walk plaza)  
Carmel, IN 46032

**317-705-9711**  
tollfree: 800-643-6737  
fax: 317-705-1402

staff@themysterycompany.com  
www.themysterycompany.com

### Hours

Monday - Wednesday:  
10:30 am - 5:30 pm  
Thursday & Friday:  
10:30 am - 8 pm  
Saturday:  
10:30 am - 6 pm  
Sunday:  
Noon - 4 pm



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## Newsletter #10 • May 24, 2004

After a busy April and May full of events, we have a June that's also busy and full of events. Our June calendar, below, offers a nice variety, something for everyone. We'll have more details about the events in follow-up mailings, by mail and by email. (If you're not already receiving our email updates, we invite you to sign up. We share some material between paper and e-mailings, but mostly we do different things in each. To subscribe, send your request to [news@themysterycompany.com](mailto:news@themysterycompany.com).)

For this newsletter, we're turning our attention to recent arrivals in the store. It's the busiest time of the year for our genre, as publishers vie for space in your summer reading plans. Already in are new books by Michael Connelly, Robert B. Parker, John Sandford, Barbara D'Amato, Amanda Quick and Randy Wayne White, and coming soon are Janet Evanovich, Lisa Scottoline and Sue Grafton. Whether you're looking for one of those big books or any one of the thousands of other titles we carry, we look forward to helping you find the book that's right for you.

I've been asked to give a keynote speech for a writers' conference in mid-June, a conference geared mostly towards as-yet unpublished mystery writers. I've been sketching out some ideas that look at the publishing business from an unconventional perspective. I'd like to do a trial run of my talk here in the store on Wednesday, June 2 at 7 pm. I hope that some of you — especially those of you interested in the business — will come ready to tell me whether I'm on the right track.

*Yours in mystery, Jim*

## Calendar

**Wednesday, May 26, 7 pm.** Discussion: *Booked to Die* by John Dunning

**Thursday, May 27, noon.** Discussion: *Booked to Die* by John Dunning

**Wednesday, June 2, 7 pm**

Jim will test out a talk on publishing — see note above

**Saturday, June 5, 2 pm**

**Derby Rotten Scoundrels** is the title of a new anthology of eleven stories of "equine evil." Authors are Kit Ehrman, Tamera Huber, Sandra Cerow Leonard, Jeffrey Marks, Elaine Munsch, Beverle Graves Myers, P.J. Robertson, Brenda Stewart and Laura Young. All but Marks and Young will visit to talk about and sign copies of the book.

**Wednesday, June 9, 1-3 pm**

**Karen Harper**, author of five mysteries set in Ohio's Amish community and of six mysteries featuring Queen Elizabeth I as a sleuth, will drop by to sign copies of her books. This will be a "stock signing;" she will sign books, and she'll be available for a little while to chat. We'll serve tea and scones.

**Thursday, June 10, 7 pm**

**Patricia Sprinkle** and **Julie Wray Herman** visit to talk about and sign copies of their books. Sprinkle's series featuring magistrate MacLaren Yarbrough is described as "thoroughly Southern." Herman's "Three Dirty Women" series is centered around a landscaping company of that name.

**Saturday, June 19, 1 pm**

The Poisoned Pen Posse rides into town! **Kit Ehrman**, **Judy Clemens** and **Beverle Graves Myers** — three writers published by the Poisoned Pen Press — visit to talk about and sign copies of their books.

**Wed., June 23, 7 pm.** Discussion: *Masie Dobbs* by Jacqueline Winspear

**Thursday, June 24, noon.** Discussion: *Masie Dobbs* by Winspear

# NEW & NOTEWORTHY

## ***Double Play* by Robert B. Parker**

Putnam, \$24.95

Others are calling this Robert B. Parker's best book in years, but I can't verify that claim myself. I gave up on Parker some time ago; despite enjoying Parker's snappy dialog, Spenser and Hawk's partnership, and the tough-guy code, I felt overwhelmed by Susan and the wonder dog. What I can tell you is that while *Double Play* isn't wholly successful, it's an excellent book, one that reminds us — sometimes in surprising ways — why we all starting reading Parker in the first place.

The scene is 1947, and Jackie Robinson breaks the Major League color barrier. The Brooklyn Dodgers hire Joseph Burke to handle threats. The bond that develops between the two men is steadfast, and it's a precursor to the themes that Parker developed in his earlier fiction. The reason that I use the word "precursor" is that in addition to the main narrative, Parker intersperses reminiscences of his own boyhood, listening to Red Barber's play-by-play on the radio. In intimate terms, Parker shows us how he and his characters grew up.

**Signed copies at 20% off — a great Father's Day gift.**

— Jim

## ***Doctored Evidence* by Donna Leon**

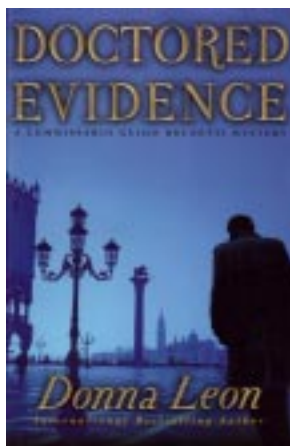
Atlantic Monthly, \$22.00

In the 12th book of the Commisario Guido Brunetti series, once again Guido has to take over an investigation bungled by others in his department.

Lieutenant Scarpa, the smug bully who has drawn the murder case of a hated recluse, relies on his prejudices to go for the easy solution. He orders the detention and arrest of the dead woman's Romanian housekeeper. The arrest results in the tragic death of the housekeeper. Disgusted by Scarpa's handling of the case, Guido looks into the matter and soon realizes that the murderer is still at-large.

*Doctored Evidence* is another wonderfully written book by Donna Leon. Guido has to be one of my favorite fictional detectives. He is a decent man coping in a corrupt society. Yet, he is no saint; he is human enough to use his peculiar understanding of his world's perverted rules to his advantage. His family is so normal and their problems are ones to which we can relate: a working wife who both loves and hates her job; two teenagers who find their parents alternately embarrassing and necessary; and a dying mother that Guido feels he has failed in some way by institutionalizing her. Leon captures Guido's every emotion, be it his frustration over his mother's illness or his appreciation of the cool breeze off the lagoon on a sultry day.

— Moni



## **Guido Brunetti mysteries by Donna Leon**

(UK title is listed first where it differs. Most are not in print in the US but we regularly import paperbacks from the UK; call or email to reserve copies of the titles you need.)

*Death at La Fenice* (1992)

*Death in a Strange Country* (1993)

*The Anonymous Venetian/Dressed for Death* (1994)

*A Venetian Reckoning/Death and Judgment* (1995)

*Acqua Alta* (1996)

*The Death of Faith* (1997)

*A Noble Radiancance* (1998)

*Fatal Remedies* (1999)

*Friends in High Places* (2000)

*A Sea of Troubles* (2001)

*Wilful Behaviour* (2002)

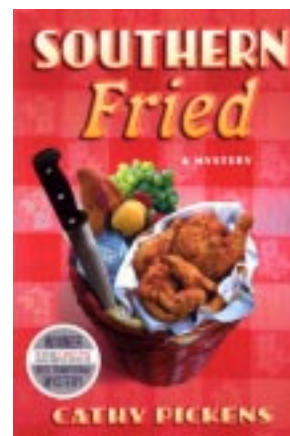
*Uniform Justice* (2003)

*Doctored Evidence* (2004) — **a few signed copies available**

## ***Southern Fried* by Cathy Pickens**

St. Martin's, \$23.95

Avery Andrews, a young yuppie lawyer, has just moved back to her hometown in the foothills of South Carolina after losing job as a corporate attorney. While she considers setting up a practice in her quiet hometown, she picks up a couple of clients. A furniture manufacturing plant burns down — arson is suspected — right after Avery is hired to represent the owner in a dispute with environmental agencies. A body is discovered in the rubble. Avery also represents the husband of a woman who disappeared 15 years ago. Her body has just been found in a submerged car.



Avery sets out to solve these mysteries while she ponders her future as a lawyer. Avery has the curiosity demanded of a good amateur sleuth, but she doesn't set out foolishly. There are a few quirky characters, but none are drawn so broadly as to be caricatures. This book has a realness about it that makes it compelling. The humor comes from the characters and the situations, and never seems forced.

*Southern Fried*, this year's winner of St. Martin's Press Malice Domestic Contest for best first traditional mystery, has all the ingredients of a good Southern mystery, and it's spiced with just the right amount of murder and quirky Southern characters to make for good reading.

— Sherry

## ***The Maine Mulch Murders* by A. Carman Clark**

Worldwide, \$5.99

Amy Creighton is at the local lumberyard gathering saw-

dust to mulch her strawberry beds when she finds the body of a young man at the bottom of the pile. Amy and Dort, the town marshal, work with state and county investigators to give the victim a name. The victim came to town to find his birth parents; he made someone so uncomfortable that he was killed.

Amy's expertise as a detail-minded editor who asks a lot of questions helps to unravel the small town secrets that will bring even more deaths before the week is over. The story is fast-paced and believable. The author, a Maine native, has an excellent sense of place. The new beginnings of an old friendship between Dort and Amy and their compassion toward people and animals make it a story you won't soon forget.

— Edna

### **Whiskey Sour by J.A. Konrath**

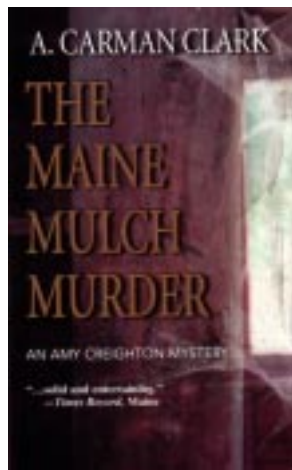
Hyperion, \$21.95

*Whiskey Sour* is a page-turning delight and a darn good mystery to-boot. Lt. Jacqueline Daniels — Jack to her colleagues in the Chicago Police Department — has been a police officer for more years than she cares to admit. She's seen it all, or so she believes. But the murder she is called to on a cold Chicago day alters that belief.

A woman's body has been found in a garbage can. The victim was strangled, mutilated and posed. A note found on the body announces the arrival on the Chicago scene of a new psycho killer, The Gingerbread Man. With heat from the mayor's office and the arrival of the Feds, Jack is feeling the pressure to find the killer and stop him before he kills again. After the second body is found, Jack taunts the psycho who makes it personal.

Konrath does a wonderful job of depicting Jack Daniels as a fallible human being just doing the best job she can. She is a fortysomething divorcee whose live-in sort of boyfriend has just left her for his personal trainer. She is married to her job, and between her insomnia, her predilection for whiskey sours and her nonexistent social life, she is a woman on the edge. But the edge of what is a question readers take with them through the book. Will she drown herself in drink? Will she go to the dating service as her partner urges to find a social life? Or, will she bury herself in her job until she dies?

— Moni



### **Desperate Journeys by Terence Faherty et al**

Worldwide, \$6.99

A brief note about this paperback anthology: Terence Faherty has published a new 90 plus-page novella, "The First Proof," featuring Owen Keane, on a trip to Maine with Marilyn Tucci to bury her estranged husband. This strong story is a must for Faherty's fans, and is alone worth the price of the book. Other writers (whose stories I haven't yet read) included are Betty Webb, Nancy Baker Jacobs and Jonathan Harrington.

## **Friends & Neighbors**

*Company Members can get an early look at forthcoming books through our Friends & Neighbors program. We offer a selection of advance reading copies of new mysteries. You may borrow one ARC at a time without charge. All we ask is that you return the ARC with your comments about the book and that you allow us to use your comments in the store, on our website and in our newsletter.*

*This review is by Kevin D. Smith:*

### **The Shifting Tide by Anne Perry**

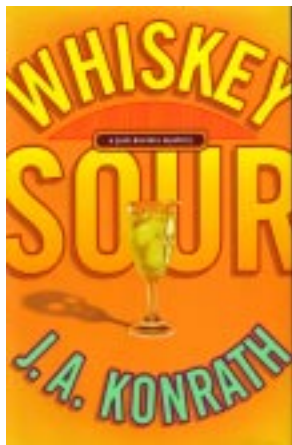
Ballantine, \$25.95

In *Death of a Stranger*, Anne Perry wrapped up a major plot line with the return of memory to William Monk, the private enquiry agent whose amnesia laid the groundwork for 12 novels. I admit to some fear for the future after reading *Stranger*. With his memory returned for the most part, would the books no longer have the "double-tension" of the split plot?

The publisher's notes state that *The Shifting Tide* (Perry's 13th Monk novel) "represents a thrilling second beginning for this acclaimed series." This could be disconcerting for those who have come to enjoy the exploits of Monk, his wife Hester, and their circle of acquaintances. However, we find most of that circle still intact. Monk has taken on a new case, searching for a shipment of ivory tusks stolen from a boat on the Thames as it waited to unload. The watchman on the boat was found dead at the scene. However, the focus of the ship owner is much more on finding the stolen ivory than finding the murderer. Perry does an excellent job in handling three separate, yet intertwined, plot lines. We move from Monk's current case to Hester's current cause, a house in the slums in which she and other volunteers care for ill or injured poor women. In addition to that, the romance between Oliver Rathbone and Margaret Ballinger continues to blossom.

At times in the past, it seemed that Perry tied up the loose ends of her plots rather quickly, and almost too neatly. This book is more like the earlier ones with a swift-moving plot (after the initial setting of the scene, which is a bit draggy) and taut writing. The end may be a bit too convenient, but the reader's interest is held until the end. The characters are well-rounded and Perry avoids caricatures or stereotypes for the most part. The personalities are genuine and characters have both likeable and unpleasant traits, making them human.

I am always excited to see a new Anne Perry novel (of either series) on the shelves, and this one was no exception. Perry's writing continues to meet the high standards set in earlier books, and this newest one is a very enjoyable read.





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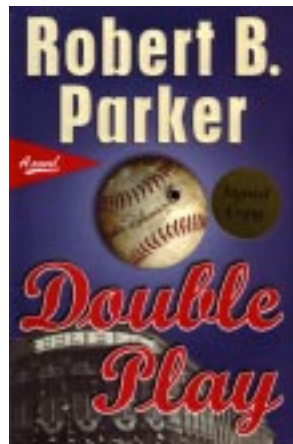
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**New &  
noteworthy,  
plus a calendar  
of our June  
events!**

## In store specials!

Markdowns and other special offers. Limited time only:

**Robert B. Parker's *Double Play*.** Signed copies available at 20% off. (See our review inside this newsletter.)



**John Sandford's *Hidden Prey*.** All copies on hand are 20% off. We have a very limited number of signed copies, which are also 20% off until they're gone.

**Amanda Quick's *The Paid Companion*.** Signed copies available at 20% off.

**Michael Connelly's *The Narrows*.** Free DVD with purchase of the new hardcover, which features both Harry Bosch and the return of The Poet. The DVD is entitled *Blue Neon Night: Michael Connelly's Los Angeles*. The DVD is not available for sale separately.

## Membership renewals

If you joined our discount program in our first three months (March, April or May 2003), it's time for you to renew your Mystery Company membership. We'll be mailing renewal notices in the coming week. Renewal is free if you spend at least \$300 each year. We'll let you know if you're close! You'll need to renew if you want to continue to receive this newsletter!

## Email newsletter

In addition to this paper newsletter, we send out newsy (and opinionated) email updates. The emails and this newsletter share some contents, but they're not identical. We hope that you'll choose to get both.

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