

Hello,

Spring is my favorite time of year here in South Carolina. The flowers are gorgeous and, even though we have some warm days, we don't have the summer weather yet. But in reality spring seems to be over and the weather is showing at what summer will bring.

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Thanks to those of you who sent comments about e-books. When I go to Amazon to look up a book (they usually list the most reviews for a book), I find more and more of their books are available in Kindle format. Shelf Awareness, a daily email on books and bookstores, had the following quote in connection to e-books:

"Books emanate romanticism and possess the ability to create a stronger social community. Local bookstores are breeding grounds of positivity, the creativity. In Austin, we can frequent BookPeople, Austin Books or Monkeywrench Books . . . to get away from the everyday stresses of life, either to relax with the latest Grisham novel or to chill with a cup of coffee and listen to a new beat. Bookstores are artistic havens for individuals to outsource creative energy. Digital books just can't provide this same type of community outreach, and if more people continue to replace books with convenient versions, small community bookstores may suffer or eventually die off."--Amanda Patterson in the [Daily Texan](#).

Those are some good thoughts. I wonder what we are losing by becoming so tied to computers and not interacting with people as often.

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For those of you who are fans of the books by Christopher Paolini, the following was reported in Publisher's Weekly:

[Knopf to Publish Inheritance Books 3 and 4 by Paolini](#)  
By Diane Roback

And then there were four. Christopher Paolini's Inheritance Trilogy, the first two volumes of which have sold 12.5 million copies worldwide, has officially become a "cycle," with Knopf's announcement this morning that there will be a fourth novel. The third book, which is still untitled, will publish on September 2008 in a national laydown. A publish date and title for the fourth book have not been named.

We do know the name of the third book – it's Brisingr – but I haven't figured out how to pronounce it.

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One of the newest from Poisoned Pen Press is a great book of mystery lists:

**The Essential Mystery Lists: For Readers, Collectors, and Librarians (compiled & edited by Roger M. Sobin; Poisoned Pen Press; trade paperback; \$39.95)** Yes, it's nearly \$40... but it's worth it! Almost 600 pages full of just about every mystery list imaginable... all awards (Edgars, Ann Macavities, etc.), various authors' "favorites" lists, etc. All presented in a simple, checklist fashion. This is a book that true mystery fans will want in their collection!

**If you are interested, let me know and I'll order one for you.**

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Please send me your reviews of books. We all are looking for new authors and your review just might lead us to one. We aren't looking for anything but the name of the book and the author, an overview of the story and your assessment of it.

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And now on to the authors and the books.....

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**Earthly Pleasures** by Karen Neches  
Simon and Schuster, \$14, Trade paperback

This isn't a mystery – but it is a book that I thought about a lot after I read it. *Publisher's Weekly* can tell you about the book better than I could:

*Neches presents in her appealingly unorthodox debut a heaven where angels lust, drink and follow terrestrial celebrity gossip. Skye Sebring, a greeter in the Hospitality Department of Heaven who finds herself drawn to the Earthly Pleasures TV channel (reality TV for Heaven dwellers) she welcomes the handsome, reformed playboy Ryan Bad Boy Blaine to the pearly gates. The lawyer son of a former president, Ryan's stay in heaven is cut short (his death is more of the brush-with-death variety), but he can't forget Skye, who reminds him of someone he knew. The fit mutual for Skye, who follows Ryan back to Earth, where it's pretty apparent there's something strange going on with Ryan's wife, Susan, who is planning a huge gala wedding follow-up to their earlier low-key impromptu nuptials. As Skye investigates her connection with Ryan and Ryan into what's causing his wife's strange behavior (he also forms a radio call-in show habit), a tangled story of cold ambition and true love unfolds. Neches's funny and sweet novel shows that to err is human and angelic as well. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.*

When I asked Karen Neches how she got the idea for this book, she sent me the following:

"One day this crazy thought came to me 'Bridget Jones meets *Lovely Bones*.' In other words, I wanted to write a lighthearted novel set in Heaven. "

when I wrote the novel I'd just gotten married so I was intrigued by the idea of a love that reaches across the dimensions. I loved designing my very own Heaven with bathtubs that fill up with Perrier and rose petals, an unlimited supply of nonfattening chocolate, and champagne without consequence.

I highly recommend the book!.

Check out her web site at <http://karenneches.com/>.

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### **An Irish Country Doctor**

#### **An Irish Country Village**

by Patrick Taylor

Forge. \$14.95 each, Trade paperback

Again, not a mysteries but books to be read and re-read many times. The stories are set in Ballybucklebo, Ireland, a fictional Irish village in rural Ulster, 1964.

Some short reviews:

"In a style joyously reminiscent of James Herriot, Dr. Taylor conjures up the rural Irish town of Ballybucklebo that is a pleasure to visit and very difficult to leave. I had a hoot following the humorous and at times poignant exploits of the irascible family doctor, Fingal O'Reilly, and his young, wide-eyed (and urban) apprentice, Barry Laverty, as they confront all manner of man and beast in the eccentric but lovable town. I can hardly wait for more."—Daniele, international bestselling author of **Rage Therapy**

"Wraps you in the sensations of a vanished time and place. Like Barry Laverty [the hero of the novel] you join the household. You meet his eccentric housekeeper, Kinky (short for 'Mrs. Kinkaid'), who tends to come bustling in with a tray, saying things like: 'Tea, and bit of toasted, buttered barmbrack.'"  
*Vancouver Sun*

"With an unerring eye for detail, the talents of a natural storyteller and the ability to pepper his anecdotes with large doses of wit and humor, Patrick Taylor has written a delightful novel...the lives of the engaging and eccentric townspeople, whose hilarious mishaps provide a perfect foil for the endeavors of the town's medical men."— *Calgary Herald*

These are books to curl up with on a rainy weekend – good stories and wonderful characters.

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### **Death's Golden Whisper** by R. J. Harlick

Napoleon Publishing, \$12.95, trade paperback

Napoleon Publishing is a Canadian publisher which has produced some excellent books from some excellent writers. R. J. Harlick was new to me. I read her first book, I was hooked on the series. I asked her to give me something that I could put in the newsletter. She sent the following:

*The Meg Harris Mystery series by R.J. Harlick*

*This unique series is set in the wilds of West Quebec, where trees outnumber people a million to one and lakes a thousand to one. The main protagonist Meg Harris fled the big city and a failed marriage to heal her bruised soul on the idyllic shores of Echo Lake, where her struggles to establish a new life are helped by her new friends, the Migiskin Algonquin. But as the seasons change, her much sought for peace is invariably interrupted by injustice and violence. Unable to ignore it, she becomes enmeshed in a quagmire of murderous intrigue and finds herself racing to catch the real killer before it's too late. Two books in the series are **Death's Golden Whisper** and **Red Ice for a Shroud**.*

*In the 3<sup>rd</sup> book, **The River Runs Orange**, Meg Harris discovers the remains of a woman whose very existence takes the archeological world by storm when her neighbours, the Migiskin Algonquin declare their rights to the ancient bones, Meg becomes embroiled in a fight that pits ancient beliefs against modern ones and can only lead to murder. As Meg races to catch the killer, she finds herself once more daring the river's fury, this time with an added danger, a raging forest fire.*

*When I set out to write the Meg Harris series, I wanted to make the setting an integral part of the story. I chose a setting I know and love well, the eras, lakes, rivers and forests of West Quebec that stretch northward from the shores of the Ottawa River.*

*I wanted a series character that did more than solve murders. I wanted someone to whom readers could relate, someone who faced the same obstacles in our daily lives and didn't always deal with them effectively. Thus Meg Harris was born. She drinks a little too much, is afraid of the dark, yet she stands alone at Three Deer Point, the isolated Victorian cottage, she inherited from her Great-aunt Agatha. Her only companion is Sergei, a giant poodle as wimpy one at that.*

*With this series I also wanted to bring alive to my readers the culture of the Algonquin, a people that have inhabited this land for thousands of years. The Fishhook People or Migiskan Anishinabeg, as they prefer to call themselves, came into being. I explore the challenges facing the Algonquin today: the ancient customs that help to root them to the land the Creator gave in their care.*

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### **Death Will Get You Sober** by Elizabeth Zelvin

Thomas Dunne/St. Martin's Minotaur, \$23.95, hardcover

I was curious about this book after reading the title. I couldn't imagine how the sobriety of an alcoholic could generate an interesting mystery. Eliza

Zelin found a way and I found that I really enjoyed it. Elizabeth was kind enough to send me some information on the book:

*"Don't drink, go to meetings...and investigate a murder. When Bruce Kohler wakes up in detox on the Bowery on Christmas Day, his biggest fear is boredom if he stays sober. Instead, he's catapulted not only into a murder investigation but also into the world of recovery in the 12-step programs in York.*

*When a detox buddy unexpectedly dies in the next bed, Bruce cares more than he expected to. It's only a few stops on the subway to Park Avenue, the victim's family has been trying to ignore their alcoholic black sheep, with his trust fund, his unfortunate nasty streak, and his knowledge of the fa secrets.*

*Helping Bruce stay sober and find the killer are two friends he thought he'd lost: a computer wiz and history buff who loves AA and the world's most codependent addictions counselor, always ready to help and mind everybody's business. Their sleuthing takes them from the corporate towers to th basements of New York."*

*Elizabeth Zelin is a New York City psychotherapist who has directed alcohol treatment programs, including one on the Bowery. She has written an widely on addictions, codependency, and online mental health. Currently she does online therapy at LZcybershrink.com. Liz says, "I read and love n myself, and I also wanted to pay tribute to the courage and honesty of people in recovery." Visit Liz's author website at [www.elizabethzelvin.com](http://www.elizabethzelvin.com).*

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**House Rules, A Joe Demarco Thriller** by Mike Lawson

Atlantic Monthly Press, \$23.00, hardcover

When I started reading the first book in this series (this is the third book) I wasn't certain I would like it since I don't normally read 'thrillers'. I was ve in hesitating because the book grabbed my attention at the beginning and didn't let go until the end!

Joe DeMarco's title is "Counsel Pro Tem for Liaison Affairs," but he really works for John Fitzpatrick Mahoney, Speaker of the House, on any projec can't be traced back to Mahoney. All the stock government types are here, but Lawson's craft, intelligence and humor turn these ho-hum regulars ir characters worth savoring. DeMarco himself is perfectly human, prey to all the species' frailties and tremendously appealing. The bad guys are suffi evil, the plot properly labyrinthine, the solution to the mystery completely satisfying.

The first book is The Inside Ring and the second is The Second Perimeter. I suggest reading the series in order. Highly recommended!

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**Wishbones** by Carolyn Haines

St. Martins Minotaur, \$23.95, hardcover

I was so glad to find out that Carolyn had a new Sarah Booth Delaney book coming out the end of June. The series is wonderful.

Southern gal Sarah Booth Delaney packs up her hound dog and her P.I. business and sets off for Hollywood to take a shot at stardom. No stranger she aces the screen test for a racy remake of the movie Body Heat alongside leading man Graf Miliou. The chemistry between them is undeniable, ; not? Graf has already starred in one of Sarah's previous affairs and is well on his way to landing a big part in the sequel.

Thrilled as Sarah is, her dream come true comes at a price. She has to leave behind her family's ancestral home in Mississippi, her closest friends, possibility of settling down with her longtime love to film on location in Costa Rica. And it's not long before rivalries flare, mysterious accidents occur leading lady finds herself in some steamy tabloids without turning up in a single frame of film.

Carolyn Haines's Wishbones takes the sultry romance and colorful friendships of this delightfully Southern series and heads out west for a mystery i thrilling off camera as it is on.

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**In a Dark Season** by Vicki Lane

Dell, \$6.99, paperback

Many of you know how much I like the Elizabeth Goodweather series. And I know that many of you who were uncertain about the first book, **Signs Blood.**, returned for book 2 and then book 3, etc, This is the fourth book to bring the reader into the Appalachians and Elizabeth's family and friends this one in one sitting. The great news is that the book was #7 for May on the *Southern Impendent Bookseller* list – and the book just came out the May!

A description of the book:

In a North Carolina winter, new vistas appear through the bare trees. For Elizabeth Goodweather of Full Circle Farm, still a newcomer after more the years, one terrible glimpse ignites a mystery that reaches back years into these hills, drawing together dozens of seemingly unconnected lives. Eliza sees a frail old woman on a high porch where dolls hang by twine. When the woman jumps, and Elizabeth reacts, there is no turning back.

Nola Barrett's ancient, sprawling house is spewing a dark past: of depravity, scandal and murder. Her land is at the center of multiple mysteries, ran a suspicious death to the brutal rape of a young woman to the legend of a handsome youth hanged for murder. But with Nola recovering from her self-inflicted wounds, Elizabeth has inherited her mad, violent drama—while a killer has a perfect view of it all....

If you haven't tried her books and you like mysteries set in the Appalachian Mountains, [you are in for a treat with this series.](#)

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**Corpse Pose** by Diana Killian  
Prime Crime, \$6.99, Paperback

I wanted this book to be another in the Poetic Death series which starts with **High Rhymes and Misdemeanors**. When I found out that it was the first in another series I didn't want to read this book – but I realized I was being childish. So I started this book – and was I ever glad that I did!! It's a keeper. The mystery is written well – the clues are more than fair but I still didn't figure out who did it until the end of the book. All of the characters are believable and when I finished the book, I felt like I had read about real people.

Ever since Andy (her husband) ditched her for another man-A.J. Alexander hasn't exactly been on the road to inner peace. Then Dianta Mason, her yoga-guru aunt, is found dead, and A.J. is named the sole heir to her lucrative yoga studio-making her a multimillionaire, a prime suspect, and the ki next target.

A new book in the Poetic Death series will be out in spring of 2009. If you haven't read the series, now is the time to start with **High Rhymes and Misdemeanors** and while you are waiting read the start of a great new series.

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## Award News

The North American Branch of the International Association of Crime Writers is pleased to announce that **The Outlander, by Gil Adamson (House Anansi Press)**, has been named the winner of the organization's annual HAMMETT PRIZE for a work of literary excellence in the field of crime writing.

Other books nominated for the 2007 HAMMETT PRIZE were *The Yiddish Policemen's Union: A Novel*, by Michael Chabon (HarperCollins); *End Game: An Aurelio Zen Mystery*, by Michael Dibdin (1947-2007) (Pantheon); *Dahlia's Gone: A Novel*, by Katie Estill (St. Martin's); and *Stalin's Ghost: An Renko Novel*, by Martin Cruz Smith (Simon & Schuster).

Ms. Adamson received a bronze trophy, designed by West Coast sculptor, Peter Boiger. The award ceremony took place on June 7, in Toronto, during the Bloody Words mystery convention banquet.

I haven't had a chance to read the book but *Publisher's Weekly* had the following review:

*"Starred Review. Set in 1903, Adamson's compelling debut tells the wintry tale of 19-year-old Mary Boulton (widowed by her own hand) and her far-flung odyssey across Idaho and Montana. The details of Boulton's sad past—an unhappy marriage, a dead child, crippling depression—slowly emerge as she reluctantly ventures into the mountains, struggling to put distance between herself and her two vicious brothers-in-law, who track her like prey in retaliation for her killing of their kin. Boulton's journey and ultimate liberation—made all the more captivating by the delirium that runs in the recesses of her mind—speaks to the resilience of the female spirit in the early part of the last century. Lean prose, full-bodied characterization, memorable settings: scenes of hardship all lift this book above the pack. Already established as a writer of poetry (Ashland) and short stories (Help Me, Jacques Cousteau), Adamson also shines as novelist. (Apr.)*

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As you can see, this issue of Cat Scratchings has not been sent via the email tool we were using. This newsletter is an experiment. It is much easier for me to create the newsletter which means I will send more. Feedback would be appreciated. And don't forget to forward this email to your book loving friends!!

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One of our newsletter recipients has been diagnosed with 'suspected Lewy Body Dementia'. I had never heard of it until Lars sent me the information about his web site. It is second behind Alzheimer's.

Lars has created a wonderful music CD and the profits from the CD will go to research. I recommend the CD highly and it's a purchase for a great cause. You can read more about it at <http://cdbaby.com/cd/larsika> and get an idea of what the CD music is like. The email address for Lars is at that site and also more information about this disease. Even if you don't want to purchase the CD, **please** pass along the information so that more people can be educated about this.

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## Ordering

Send us the name of the books you want to purchase and, in return, we'll send you a PayPal invoice. It's easy to use and

We keep copies of the newsletters on [www.aliensandalibis.com](http://www.aliensandalibis.com) so if you missed a book last newsletter, you can find it.

Check out the [Used Book](#) section of the web page. We will be adding some new entries soon!

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## **Feedback**

We would appreciate feedback on the newsletter. What are we doing right? What do we need to change? We would also see you again soon with more book information. Thanks for reading our newsletters. We promise a longer one next time.

**Deb and Gary**