



NERO BLANC - "Writing a Thriller"

a.k.a. Cordelia Frances Biddle and Steve Zettler

Nero Blanc is the pseudonym for husband and wife Steve Zettler and Cordelia Frances Biddle who have collaborated on nine crossword mysteries, all published by Berkley Prime Crime, a division of Penguin, USA. ANOTHER WORD TO DIE FOR debuts July 2005.

When not working as co-authors, Steve is the author of the international thrillers: *The Second Man*, *Double Identity*, and *Ronin*. A native of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, he attended Clemson University before joining the United States Marine Corps and serving 17 months combat duty in Vietnam. Prior to his writing career, he was an actor in New York and Los Angeles, appearing in the original production of the Pulitzer Prize winner, *A Soldier's Play*, as well as the daytime and prime-time dramas *Columbo*, *Falcon Crest*, *Divorce Court* & *One Life to Live*.

Cordelia's other works include the historical drama *Beneath the Wind* (Simon and Schuster, 1993), *Murder at San Simeon* (Scribner, 1996) and *Caring for Your Cherished Possessions* (Crown, 1989). She has contributed to *Town and Country*, *W*, and *Hemispheres*. As a stage actress, she co-starred in Albert Innaurato's *Gemini* directed by Broadway's Jerry Zaks. She also appeared in the daytime drama *One Life To Live*. Cordelia is currently working on *The Conjuror*, a thriller set in Philadelphia in 1842.



QUINN DALTON - "Dialogue Dynamics"

Quinn Dalton's first novel, *High Strung*, was released by Simon & Schuster's Atria Books in July 2003, with a collection of short stories, *Bulletproof Girl*, forthcoming in April 2005. Her stories have appeared or are forthcoming in literary magazines such as *ACM (Another Chicago Magazine)*, *The Baltimore Review*, *Cottonwood*, *Emrys Journal*, *Glimmer Train*, *Indiana Review*, *Ink*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Mangrove* and *StoryQuarterly*, and in anthologies such as *Sex And Sensibility* and *American Girls About Town* (sale proceeds benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation). She is the winner of the *Pearl* 2002 Fiction Prize for her short story, "Back on Earth" and a recipient of a North Carolina Arts Council 2002-2003 artist fellowship. Currently she teaches fiction writing workshops with UNC Greensboro and the North Carolina Writers' Network and consults on fiction and non-fiction manuscripts. She received a BA in English at Kent State University in 1992 and completed an MFA in creative writing at the University of North Carolina Greensboro in 1994. She lives with her husband and daughter in Greensboro. See www.quinndalton.com



GEORGE GARRETT - "Poetry: Creating Imagery"

Author of thirty-five books and editor or coeditor of nineteen others, George Garrett earned graduate and undergraduate degrees at Princeton. He recently retired from the University of Virginia after a forty-year teaching career at Virginia and elsewhere. Among his honors and awards are the Rome Prize of the American Academy of Arts and Letters; a *Sewanee Review* Fellowship in poetry; other fellowships from the Guggenheim, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations and the National Endowment of the Arts; the T.S. Eliot Award of the Ingersoll Foundation; the Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry; the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in Short Fiction; and an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has also received the Commonwealth of Virginia Governor's Award for the Arts (2000) and served as Poet Laureate of Virginia (2001-2004). He has three children and two grandchildren and, together with Susan, his wife of fifty-two years, lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.



GARY KESSLER - "Writing for Newspapers"

Gary Kessler worked for 27 years with the U.S. government's foreign media news agency, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, where he served as senior editor of the East Asia bureau, deputy chief of the Southeast Asia/South Asia and Middle East bureaus, chief of the Middle East bureau, chief analyst for China and the Third World, and Managing Editor. During his years abroad he also served as entertainment columnist for four national-level foreign newspapers and was a consultant for such movie productions as *The Deerhunter*, *The Killing Fields*, and *Good Morning Vietnam*. Gary currently is a freelance book editor, working almost exclusively for traditional book publishers. He has written two published thrillers, *Laughter Down the Mountain* and *Retired with Prejudice*, and his short story/essay collection, *On the Downtown Mall*, was launched at the March 2002 Virginia Festival of the Book. In 2002, he conducted a worldwide, online editorial workshop for the WritersNet writers' Web site (www.writers.net), which resulted in a two-volume *WritersNet Anthology of Prose*. Most recently, he coauthored a book on publishing, *Finding Go! Matching Questions and Resources in Getting Published*. Gary's editorial and personal writing projects, along with self-help guidance in writing and publishing, can be viewed at www.editsbooks.com.



ELIZABETH MASSIE - “Writing Supernatural Fiction”

Elizabeth Massie is a two-time Bram Stoker Award-winning author of numerous horror novels, novellas, and short stories. Her short horror fiction has appeared in many magazines and anthologies published by Random House, Avon, Pocket, HarperCollins, Morrow, Bantam, Carroll & Graf, and more. Her novella “Stephen” won the 1991 Bram Stoker Award and was a World Fantasy Award finalist.

Massie’s 1992 horror novel, *Sineater*, was also a Bram Stoker recipient. Subsequent books include *Welcome Back to the Night*, *Wire Mesh Mothers*, *Dark Shadows: Dreams of the Dark* (co-authored with Stephen Mark Rainey), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Power of Persuasion*, *Shadow Dreams*, and *The Fear Report*. Her bizarre poetry is included in the 2004 anthology *Devil’s Wine*, along with poems by Stephen King, Ray Bradbury, Peter Straub, and others.

2005 releases will include a novel in the new *Abbadon Inn* series from Berkley entitled *Twisted Branch* under the pen name Chris Blaine, as well as short stories “Fence Line” in the anthology *Joe Lansdale’s Lords of the Razor*, “Donald Meets Arnold” in *Inhuman Magazine*, “Bargain Basement” in *Grave Tales*, “Now I’m With the Invalids” in *Travel Guide to the Haunted Mid-Atlantic Region*, and “Pit Boy” in the NAL/Roc anthology, *Outsiders*. Elizabeth also writes historical novels for young adults. Her works include the *Young Founders* series, the *Daughters of Liberty* trilogy, and *The Great Chicago Fire: 1871*.

In addition to fiction, Elizabeth writes units and biographical features for American history textbooks for educational publishers Scott-Foresman and McMillan. She is the creator of the *Skeeryvilletown* cartoon characters. She lives in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia with illustrator Courtney Skinner (designer and builder of the mutant and other props for the 2004 Sony-released feature film, *The Lost Skeleton of Cadavra*), and is mother to Erin, 28, and Brian, 25.



SARAH MICKLEM

“Creating Distinguishing, New, Innovative Characters”

Sarah Micklem first tried to become a novelist when she was a teenager in upstate New York. She worked at a restaurant until she had saved enough money to support herself while she wrote. She lived by herself, ten miles from the nearest town, and doggedly worked on the first draft of a very bad science fiction novel. She ran out of money and went to work in a print shop, then applied for college. She attended Princeton University, and after four years of creative writing classes, she decided she wasn’t cut out to be a writer after all. She learned the trade of graphic design on the job in Lynchburg, Virginia, and discovered it was an enjoyable way to make a living. She moved to New York City, where she worked 15 years as a designer and art director for the magazines *Sports Illustrated For Kids* and *Time For Kids*.

Micklem took up writing again as a hobby while working as a designer. She started to think about a character called Firethorn, a woman hiding in the woods, and before long she began to make notes about the world her character lived in, and what happened after she left the forest. After ten years and many stops and starts, Micklem finished a novel about Firethorn. She completed the book with the help of encouragement and criticism from Abigail Thomas and her class of Tuesday Night Babes, who met in Thomas’s apartment in New York. *Firethorn* was published by Scribner in 2004, and it will appear in paperback from Bantam Spectra this summer. Micklem is working on the second book of the projected trilogy. She has a short story in *Lady Churchill’s Rosebud Wristlet*, and another forthcoming in *TriQuarterly*. She lives with her husband, poet and playwright Cornelius Eady in Washington, DC. Her website, which she designed herself, is www.firethorn.info.



ANDY STRAKA

Guest Speaker & Presenter of Awards

Acclaimed as offering “a breath of fresh air in the field of private eye fiction,” Andy Straka has been featured by *Publisher’s Weekly* as one of ten rising stars among crime authors. His first three novels star Frank Pavlicek, a Virginia based former NYPD detective, private investigator and falconer. *A Witness Above* garnered Shamus, Anthony, and Agatha Award nominations for Best First Novel in 2002. That was followed by *A Killing Sky*, which received an Anthony Award nomination for Best Paperback Original Novel. The latest book in the series, *Cold Quarry*, recently won the Shamus Award for best PBO private eye novel.

Andy is a native of upstate New York. He graduated from Williams College where he majored in English and was co-captain of the basketball team, then worked in publishing and medical sales for nearly fifteen years. A licensed falconer, he is a registered private investigator, not to mention an identical twin. His fourth Pavlicek novel, *Kitty Hitter*, will be released in the fall of 2005.