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## **Sisters' inspire aspiring mystery writers**

### **Members freely offer, share advice, nudges, support**

**By Cheryl Kennedy, Chronicle Correspondent**

It's been said that everyone has a book within them, and if that book is a mystery, Sisters in Crime would like to help get it published.

Sisters in Crime is a worldwide organization that offers networking, advice and support to mystery authors. And for local mystery writers, there is The Final Twist.

Three of the local club's published authors recently met at Kingwood's library for a panel discussion on the mechanics and art of writing mystery and suspense.

Diana Driver, president of the local chapter, recently published her first book, *Ninth Lord of the Night*, an action suspense novel about a young man who gets tangled up with murderers, artifact smugglers, and the world of Mayan myths and legends.

Driver said she's known since she was a child she wanted to write. Careers, family responsibilities and life led her into a first career in geophysics.

She said the support the group offers authors is invaluable, and she has benefited from information that has been shared on promotion.

Driver said the business of publishing and promoting a book can be ruthless because the market is so competitive.

"There's a lot to learn about this business," Driver said. "There are specific things you need to know about your publisher, royalties and promotion that are important to your book being successful or not."

Panelist Pauline Jones agrees.

Jones said she's always loved to read, and one day she decided to write a story of her own. Her inspiration comes from everywhere, she said.

Jones has published several books, including *A Dangerous Dance*, *Do Wah Diddy Die* and *Lonesome Lawmen*.

“It’s nice to talk to someone going through some of the same problems you might be having,” Jones said.

Gayle Wigglesworth, known in the Kingwood area for her book *Gayle’s Legacy, Recipes, Hints and Stories Culled from a Lifelong Relationship with Food*, was also present.

Her career in art and banking may have provided her a full life, but it’s her third career as an author that is proving to be exciting.

She recently published her first mystery, *Tea is for Terror*, and is awaiting news from her publisher on the arrival of her second book, *Washington Weirdos*.

Both books feature the character, Claire Gulliver, a likable middle-aged librarian-turned-travel-bookshop-owner.

Jones said characters are the most important part of the book.

“People need to be able to identify with your characters and what happens with them,” she said.

Once the book is written it’s time to seek out an editor and publisher.

Jones said people should not overlook the smaller publishing houses.

“After all, *Hunt for Red October* was first published by a small publisher. It was only after it got successful that it was picked up by one of the larger publishing houses,” Jones said.

Driver said first-time authors need to be prepared to get out there and promote their book and often times that will be from their own budget.

She said failure at this point could prevent future books from being published.

“If your sales are low on your first book, the publisher most likely will not pick up your second book,” Driver said. “Then there’s the issue of editors. It is important to find an editor who relates well with your subject. If not, they might not understand the book and want to change it into something entirely different from what the author originally intended.

“I had one editor who wanted to change a human character in one of my books into a dog.”

Club fieldtrips and guest speakers are tailored toward mystery and suspense writers.

One outing might be to the medical examiner’s office to witness an autopsy; a guest speaker could be a policeman or attorney.

The club also provides members with news of conferences, contests and opportunities to promote their books. The club also offers a list of authors available to talk to local clubs or women’s groups about the genre of mystery and suspense writing.

All three agree nothing can happen unless the vision becomes words and the words are written down so they can be read.

Driver said, “just start writing. Do it for the pure enjoyment of it.”

“We are there for you when you are ready,” she said. “Come and visit us.”

*For more information, visit [www.thefinaltwist.com](http://www.thefinaltwist.com)*