

Monday, February 20, 2006
Interview with author Judy Clemens

Today's interview is with fellow author Judy Clemens. As Judy mentions below, we are in a promotional group together. Her books are very popular, so please check her out.

LC: Please tell us a bit about your books.

JC: My books are about a very independent woman who owns a dairy farm and loves Harley-Davidsons. A strange combo, but people seem to like it. :) They are mysteries, and take place in SE Pennsylvania, a bit north of Philadelphia.

LC: How many books do you plan for this series?

JC: I have a contract for five, with the third coming out this August. I suppose inspiration could strike for more, but I'm not counting on it at this point.

LC: Any plans for a different series?

JC: Sure. Lots of plans! For some series and some stand-alones, too. I'm a union stage manager and I've written a book about an SM in Philly, which I'd love to get published.

LC: How did you find your agent, if you have one?

JC: I was part of a Sisters in Crime chapter called the Guppies (for as-yet-unpublished writers) and found my agent through another Guppy who was with her. It's all about knowing people!

LC: How did you find your publisher?

JC: Poisoned Pen Press is one of the few publishers left who will accept unagented manuscripts. I sold my first two books on my own by working with them directly. Their web site lists their submission policy and makes it very easy.

LC: What is your writing day like?

JC: "Day" is correct. I get Friday, when my Mom watches my daughter and my son is at school. I used to write after the kids went to bed, but find anymore that I don't have any creative thoughts left at that point. So I mostly have to cram it all in on Fridays. Most of the business and marketing aspect I do in the evenings once the kids are sleeping, so that leaves Friday for my muse to visit.

LC: How do you tackle/overcome the dreaded blank page or saggy baggy middle?

JC: I work on something else. I always have a few projects going, so when I'm stuck on one I can work on something else. Having a little time away from a stalled project does wonders.

LC: How do you promote your books?

JC: My most recent thing is a new blog I'm part of: The Little Blog of Murder: Confessions of Five Ohio Mystery Authors.

<http://www.thelittleblogofmurder.com>

I'm also part of a group called The Lethal Ladies with several other authors (including you!), visit lots of libraries (love them) and go to conferences. This week I'm visiting two book groups who have read my book for their month's pick, which is always lots of fun.

<http://www.lethalladies.us/>

LC: What is the hardest part of writing a novel for you?

JC: Making the outline. It's the hardest because this is where I figure everything out. Once I have the outline done I can write the actual book pretty quickly. That's the really fun part.

LC: What inspires you?

JC: Being around other writers is a big inspiration. It's lovely to talk with people whose brains work the same as mine. I also love to read good books, and find that incredibly inspiring.

LC: How do you research your books?

JC: I mostly talk to lots of people. For the book coming out in August I got to visit a tattooing and body piercing parlor! For the one I'm researching now, I've been gabbing with fire inspectors and arson investigators. Very interesting. For this whole series I've also had to do some manual labor on a dairy farm! I knew next to nothing when I started writing about Stella, but through working on my friend's farm I've gained so much valuable knowledge.

LC: Anything else you'd like my bloggers to know about you?

JC: I love talking to readers. There's nothing more satisfying than having people care about my characters. This world in my head actually means something to people, and that makes me extremely happy!

Thanks a million, Judy! I enjoyed chatting with you! Folks, Judy mentioned Guppys, and that group IS a great resource for authors, as well as SINC-IC. Tons of support. A search engine will easily bring them up.