

Sept. 12 2018



Gangster In Our Midst—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000APR004) & Barnes & Noble
www.bettybrandtpassick.com
<https://www.facebook.com/BettyBrandtPassick/>

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Gangster Blog

Q & A

Q. *I'm interested in how you came to write the chapter with the long car ride to Chicago ["Redemption and Grace"].*

A. I have one especially great group of friends to whom I frequently sought ideas for writing or character development dilemmas involving *Gangster In Our Midst*.

As I neared completion of the final chapters, I still hadn't told a couple pieces of the story: **1.** What did people outside of the township know about Louie La Cava (from interviews with members of Oelwein's Italian community)? **2.** What might it have been like to accompany Louie on one of his day trips to Chicago (the town marshal made these trips, but so did other locals)?

A member of the aforementioned group suggested that LLC pick up a hitchhiker from the Oelwein area on his way to Chicago.

That idea stirred a memory from decades earlier, when I viewed a movie set in the Twin Cities: "[Patty Rocks](#)." That whole movie is about the conversation that takes place between two male friends during a car ride across the country lasting several days.

With these pieces in mind, I began to write "Redemption and Grace." I set the year as 1961, just after the first Roman Catholic, J. F. Kennedy, was elected our 35th president—a continuance of the book's Catholic-Protestant war sub-theme.

The hitchhiker I created became a pretty teenage girl, Gracie. LLC quickly sees aspects of the young girl in his wife, Josephine, who too had run away from home in her teens. Is that the only reason he didn't kick Gracie out of the car (because of her unfiltered mouth)? And, perhaps you gained insights into why Al Capone might have kicked LLC out of Chicago in the early 1920s, with the threat of death if he returned! I found opportunities during this car ride to exploit and tie up several angles.

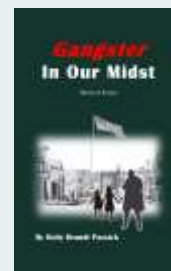


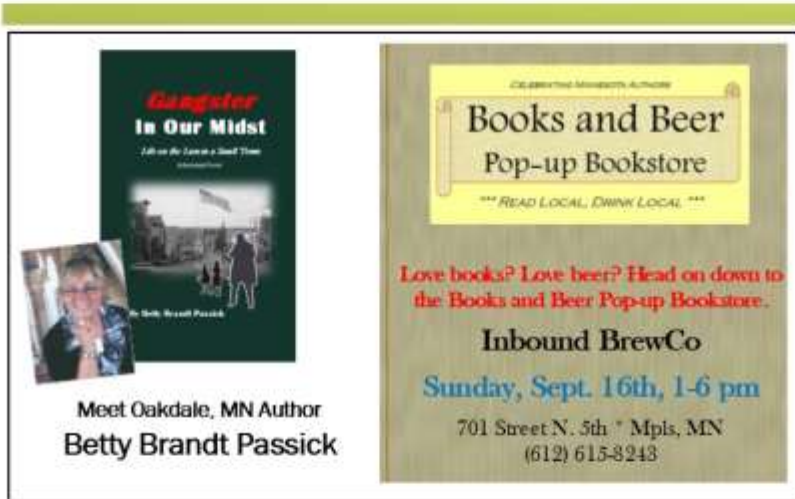
Three Fingers

July 1, 1928—Frank Yale was found slumped over the wheel of his new Lincoln near his New York home, gunned down by four men in a black Nash sedan dispensing one hundred .45 caliber bullets into his car. The police...

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I've joined several writing groups in the Twin Cities... **Books and Beer Pop-up Bookstore** is a very FUN group.

And still another September event...

If you love books and beer, I've just added the September 16th event at Inbound BrewCo in Minneapolis (next to Target Field), or attend another of the events this month.

- Sept. 12, 530-7 pm — Metro State University Library, St. Paul
"The Education of a Gangster"
- Sept. 15, 9 am-3 pm — Iowa Author Fest, Des Moines, IA
- Sun., Sept. 16th, 1-6 pm (**new**) — "Books and Beer Popup Bookstore" at Inbound BrewCo, Minneapolis
- Sept. 17, 7 pm — Marion Co. Historical Society, Knoxville, IA
"The Lonely Tragedy in Marion County"
- Sept. 22, noon-5 pm — Marydale Festival, St. Paul

"Christmas at the Depot," Dec. 2, 12-3 pm

You are invited to bid on my "Gangster In Our Midst" basket at "Christmas at the Depot" in Independence, Iowa. All eleven towns (including Fairbank) in Buchanan County are represented for the silent auction fund raiser for the Buchanan County Tourism Bureau. You have November weekends through December 2nd to bid on the items. The depot is open Noon to 8 on Saturdays and Noon to 6 on Sundays.

Attention: Book Clubs!

Generally—*Gangster In Our Midst* is a wacky, fun read about an Italian gangster who came to a small Iowa town in the 1920s. One doesn't read far into the novel before realizing that that era eerily resonates with many of today's news headlines: gangsterism, government chaos, religious hostilities, and more. Might this novel be your next book club read? If so, contact me!

Author Events

- **Wed., Sept. 12**, 530-7 pm — Metropolitan State University Library, 645 7th St E, St. Paul, MN, (651) 793-1616
- **Sun., Sept. 16th**, 1-6 pm — "Books and Beer Popup Bookstore", Inbound BrewCo, 701 Street N. 5th, Minneapolis, MN, (612) 615-8243
- **Mon, Sept. 17**, 7 pm — Marion County Historical Society (308 E. Robinson Street, Methodist Activity Center), Knoxville, IA, (641) 891-6883
- **Sat., Oct. 20**, noon (**new**) — Chapter2 Books, 226 Locust S., Hudson, WI, (715) 220-8818
- **Fri, Nov. 2**, 11 am-2 pm — Decades, 25 South Frederick, Oelwein, IA, (319) 504-1464
- **Sat., Nov. 3**, 9 am-3 pm — "Holiday Open House", Barn Happy, 11310 University Ave, Cedar Falls, IA, (319) 266-0888
- **Sun, Dec. 2**, Noon-3 pm (**new**) — "Christmas at the Depot", Illinois Central Railroad Depot, 1111 Fifth Ave. NW, Independence, Iowa, (651) 334-3439
- **Jan/Mar 2019**, time **TBD** (**new**) — West Des Moines Library, 4000 Mills Civic Pkwy., West Des Moines, IA, (515) 222-3400
- **Fri., May 3, 2019**, 10 am — Burlington Public Library, 210 Court St., Burlington, IA (319) 753-1647
- **Sat, May 4, 2019**, 11 am-3 pm — Burlington By The Book, 301 Jefferson St, Burlington, IA, (319) 753-9981
- Pending...**
- Cedar Valley Historical Society, 503 South St., Waterloo, IA, (319) 234-6357
- Iowa Railroad Historical Society, 225 10th St., Boone, IA, (515) 432-4249
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Majors & Quinn, 3038 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis, MN, (612) 822-4611

Book Fairs

- **Sat., Sept. 15**, 9 am-3 pm — Iowa Author Fest (inside event), Capital Square, 400 Locust St., Des Moines, IA
- **Sat., Sept. 22**, noon- 5 pm — Marydale Festival, 524 Maryland Ave., St. Paul, MN, (651) 488-4485