

Feb. 13, 2019



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

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Gangster Blog

Three ‘Firsts’

- ⇒ The **First Tuesday of the Month** book club in Olivia, Minn. will be the first club to read *Gangster in our Midst*! I’m told the group has about a dozen members; two are 103 years and 97 years young. “They are amazing—extremely bright and well read,” writes Carole B. “This should be a fun read!”
- ⇒ *Gangster in our Midst* is now available in **LARGE print**.
- ⇒ *Gangster in our Midst* will be available as an **AUDIBLE** book—soon!

Barn Happy—Sat. Apr 6, 9 am-3 pm

I will kick-off 2019 with the Spring Open House at Barn Happy in Cedar Falls, Iowa (see address p2). Hope to see you there!

More about the “Yellow Paint” story...

Click on this link, [The Forgotten Iowa facebook](https://www.facebook.com/TheForgottenIowa), to read comments (50+) from my post, “The Story Behind the Yellow Paint,” from my Jan. 29, 2019 BLOG.

FYI—**Rev. August Bartels** (my 2nd generation German ancestor), pastor of the ALC at Maxfield (1915-1927), Bremer County Iowa, led the charge against Iowa’s Babel Proclamation—all the way to the Supreme Court (and won!).

Interested in reading more on the subject?

[Bottomland](#) (all-Iowa book read 2017) by Michelle Hoover, follows the Hess family in the years after World War I as they attempt to rid themselves of the Anti-German sentiment that left a stain on their name.

[The End of Time](#), by Tom and Sharon Savage, tells the story about a murder-suicide in Muscatine that happened nearly a century ago that includes the physical attack on a Lutheran pastor for preaching in German during a worship service.



Rev. Bartels



“Three Fingers”

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Now available in
Paperback and E-book!

The REAL Bill Hahn

I based the fictional character Marshal Sweeney Delaney in *Gangster in our Midst* on Fairbank, Iowa's real town marshal: Charles William "Bill" Hahn (s 1916-1949).

A Fairbank girl myself, I knew Bill's daughter, Verlie. After interviewing her multiple times during 2016, we became good friends. She celebrated her 100th birthday that year—her mind still sharp as a tack.

Verlie was generous with her stories. She said her father was a tall, lanky fella...a southpaw, who was a sought-after pitcher for Fairbank and other towns. He chewed slippery elm when pitching (and likely wasn't alone in using a foreign substance to alter the baseball's trajectory toward the plate). Not until 1934 did throwing a spitball become illegal in baseball.

She added that her father had a bit of a temper, which caused him to get thrown out of the game a time or three. It was his only fault, as far as she could tell.

He was nearly thirty when he married Olia, Verlie's mom, but continued to play baseball several more years before taking the job of town marshal—the year Baby #1 (Verlie) was on the way.

Verlie's stories included her father's exchanges with the town's gangster: Louie La Cava.

I wove those nuggets throughout the novel, though none likely happened exactly as I wrote them.

I took other creative license with Bill's fictional character. In real life, he was German and a Methodist. I needed Sweeney to be Irish with blue eyes and fiery red hair—and a fallen-away Catholic—to tell other pieces of [Historical Fairbank, Iowa](#).

(As luck would have it) a few years after Bill became marshal, La Cava showed up on Main Street.

I'm now writing the **screenplay** for *Gangster in our Midst*.

In Act 1, something happens to the protagonist (Sweeney) that changes his daily routine and, ultimately, will lead to propelling the reader into the rest of the story.

This change occurs when Sweeney calls Chicago's police commissioner Captain Michael Hughes, and learns that La Cava is a *gangster* for Al Capone.

La Cava spends considerable time in Fairbank over the next sixty years.

As I write this script, I realize all over again what an excellent antagonist La Cava is for a book or movie: quirky mannerisms, mysterious—and talks in gangster-speak.



Bill Hahn



Louie La Cava



Capt. Hughes

Author Events

- Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — April Podcast, Legal Bits For Business with Atty. Julie Finch, St. Louie Park, MN
- April/Time: **TBD** — Sawyer Co. Historical Society & Museum, County Highway B, Hayward, WI, (715) 634-8053
- **Sat. Apr 6, 9am-3 pm (new)** — Barn Happy, 11310 Univ. Ave, Cedar Falls, IA, (319) 266-0888
- **Fri., May 3, 10 am** — Burlington Public Library, 210 Court St., Burlington, IA (319) 753-1647
- **Sat, May 4, 11 am-3 pm** — Burlington By The Book, 301 Jefferson, Burlington, IA 52601, (319) 753-9981
- **May 5/time: TBD** — Davenport Public Library, 321 N Main St., Davenport, IA, (563) 326-7832
- **May 5/time: TBD** — Moon River Magic, 915 15th Avenue, East Moline, Illinois
- **May/time: TBD** — Wapello County Historical Society, 210 W Main St, Ottumwa, IA, (641) 682-8676
- **May/time: TBD** — Ottumwa Public Library, 102 W 4th St, Ottumwa, IA, (641) 682-7563
- **Spring/time: TBD** — Cicero Public Library, 5225 West Cermak Rd., Cicero, Ill, (708) 652-8084
- St, Burlington, IA, (319) 753-9981
- **Spring/time: TBD (new)** — Gracie's Hutch, Lansing, IA
- **Summer/time: TBD** — West Des Moines Library, 4000 Mills Civic Pkwy., West Des Moines, IA, (515) 222-3400
- Pending...**
- Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — James Kennedy Public Library, 320 1st Ave E, Dyersville, IA 5204, (563) 875-8912
- Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Strawberry Point Public Library, 401 Commercial, Box 340, Strawberry Point, IA 52076, 563-933-4340
- Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Maynard Library, 225 Main St W, Maynard, IA 50655, (563) 637-2330
- Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Gangster Museum of America, 510 Central Ave, Hot Springs, AR, (501) 318-1717
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Next Page Books, 1105 3rd St SE, Cedar Rapids, IA, (319) 247-2665
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Wild Carrot (gift shop and restaurant), 215 E Bremer Ave, Waverly, IA, (319) 352-2215
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Winneshiek County Historical Society, 211 Winnebago St, Decorah, IA 52101, (563) 382-4166
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Templeton Rye Distillery, 209 E 3rd Ave, Templeton, IA (712) 669-8793
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Johnson Co. Historical Society, 860 Quarry Rd, Coralville, IA, (319) 351-5738
- **Date/Time: TBD** — Harrison County Welcome Ctr, 2931 Monroe Ave., Missouri Valley, Iowa, (712) 642-2114