

April 19, 2019



Gangster In Our Midst—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](#) & Barnes & Noble
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Gangster Blog

Legal Bits #78: @jlfinch interviews "Gangster In Our Midst" author Betty Brandt Passick ([link](#)):

Thank you to [Julie Finch](#) for the opportunity to participate in a "Legal Bits for Business" podcast.

Julie is a renowned Twin Cities attorney I met in 2017 at a writers conference. She spoke on legal questions she gets from budding authors like myself.

The interview happened April 16th at the [Bob Sansevere Studio](#) in St. Louis Park. Bob is a sports columnist for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. I was surprised to find that he would record the interview.

Favorite question: What inspired you to start your company? I told people since around nine years old that one day I would write a book. As decades passed, between the obligations of family and work, I came to terms with the fact that I would likely have to wait to write until I retired, which happened in 2007. I've now written three books, and a fourth is on the way.



My selfie with Bob Sansevere and Julie Finch



"Three Fingers"

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(top left) Lehmkühl Hardware in 1934, south side of Main Street. (top right) Lehmkühl Bros. Hardware, est. 1892, next door to Fairbank State Bank. (bottom) W. G. "Bill" Lehmkühl (right) with son Melvin A. 'Mud' Lehmkühl on his lap, wife 'Tillie' (center), and Bill's mother, Sophia. The man seated in rear is C. B. Everett, FSB president.

La Cava Brought a Little Excitement...

Fred H. Lehmkühl and several of his brothers founded Lehmkühl Hardware, where the business remained in operation on Main Street in Fairbank for seventy-five years between 1892-1975.

Its first location was next door to the Fairbank State Bank on the corner of Main and Second streets. In 1934, Bill Lehmkühl purchased the building that had previously housed the post office and moved Lehmkühl Hardware there. He employed his three sons at the store: Wilber 'Webb', Elmer 'Tod', and Melvin 'Mud'.

Geraldine 'Deane' (Lehmkühl) Fink, the eldest child of Mud and Vera (Cummings) Lehmkühl, recalls many stories during the years her family of five lived in the apartment above the hardware store.

Sadly, a CGW train twice claimed the lives of a family member: In October 1919, Bill's mother, Sophia, 82, was struck and killed as she attempted to cross the tracks at the Fourth Street crossing. Then in August 1944, Dale, 3, Deane's brother, was killed while playing on the tracks. Deane was eight at the time of his death.

Deane added: "While I was never struck by a train, twice I was hit by a car while darting across Main Street... Living above the hardware store was my 'yard' where I played."

Though she never met the town's gangster, Louie La Cava, her dad told stories about riding around town with him in a big fancy car with a window glass between the front and back seat. Mud thought it belonged to someone in Al Capone's gang. "Maybe La Cava brought a little excitement to Dad's life," she noted.

Author Events

— **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, (319) 753-9981

— **Sun., May 5, TBD** — Moon River Magic, 915 15th Ave., East Moline, Illinois

— **Date/time: TBD** — Davenport Public Library, 321 N Main St., Davenport, IA, (563) 326-7832

— **May/time: TBD** — Ottumwa Public Library, 102 W 4th St, Ottumwa, IA, (641) 682-7563

— **Date/time: TBD** — Iowa City Public Library, 123 S Linn St, Iowa City, IA, (319) 356-5200

— **June 22?/Time: TBD** — Landmark Commons Retirement Community, 1400 Maxhelen Blvd., Waterloo, IA, (319) 296-7100

— **Sun, Jun 23, 1-2:30 pm** — "Iowa's Oakdale Sanitorium—A Ray of Hope," Johnson Co. Historical Society, 860 Quarry Rd, Coralville, IA, (319) 351-5738

— **Fri., Aug. 9th, 10-11:30 am** — "Meet & Greet," Lake Country Booksellers, 766 Washington Square, White Bear Lake, MN, 651-426-0918

— **Tues., Sept. 24, 6:30 pm (new)** — "Iowa's Oakdale Sanitorium—A Ray of Hope," Clear Lake Public Library, 200 N. 4th St., Clear Lake, IA 641-357-6133

Book Club (kick-offs)

— **Tues., May 7, 12-3 pm** — 1st Tuesday of Month Book Club (12 mbrs.), Olivia, MN

— **Spring/time: TBD** — last Monday of the month, St. Paul, MN.

— **Spring/time: TBD** — Cicero Public Library, 5225 West Cermak Rd., Cicero, Ill, (708) 652-8084

Book Festivals

— **Sat., Apr. 27, 10 am-2 pm** — "WOW (Women of Words) Book Fair," Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka, MN

— **Sat., Apr. 27, 1-6 pm**, Books and Beer Pop-Up Bookstore - Cider Edition, Number 12 Cider house, 614 N 5th St, Mpls, MN, (612) 568-6171

— **Fri., Jun 21, Jul 12, Aug. 2, Sept 13 (5-9 pm)** — Friday Night History Cruz, Paperbacks Plus Bookstore, 2539 7th Ave E, North St. Paul, MN, (651) 770-0384

— **Sept 20-Oct 6**, Iowa City Book Festival, 123 S Linn St., Iowa City, IA, 319-356-5245

Pending...

— **Date/Time: TBD (new)** — "Wiltse Family of Strawberry Point," Wilder Foundation, 123 W. Mission St., Strawberry Point, IA, (563) 933-4615

— **Date/Time: TBD** — "Wiltse Family of Strawberry Point," Clayton County Historical/Genealogy Society, 119 N. Main St., Elkader, IA, 563-245-1065

— **April/Time: TBD** — Sawyer Co. Historical Society & Museum, County Highway B, Hayward, WI, (715) 634-8053

— **Date/Time: TBD** — James Kennedy Public Library, 320 1st Ave E, Dyersville, IA, (563) 875-8912

— **Date/Time: TBD** — Harrison County Welcome Ctr, 2931 Monroe Ave., Missouri Valley, Iowa, (712) 642-2114

— **Date/time: TBD** — Big Foot Inn, 11508 N US Highway 14, Harvard, IL, (815) 943-4740

— **Date/time: TBD** — Wapello County Historical Society, 210 W Main St., Ottumwa, IA, (641) 682-8676