

August 22, 2020



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

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Gangster Blog

Worldwide Book Exchange!

Message me if you wish to participate in a fun, unpredictable book chain from anywhere in the world. All you have to do is buy your favorite book (just one) and send it to a stranger (**when I hear from you, I'll send their details in a private message**). You'll receive a number of favorite books from people all over! Who knows if this will be successful, but if anything, hopefully someone will ENJOY A BOOK THAT YOU ADORE. It's always fun to get happy mail! Thanks, again, for joining in this book circle/thread/exchange.

Follow me on Facebook & Fairbank Islander Newspaper

"I Grew Up in Fairbank, Iowa" Facebook group page has grown to **500 members**. Join in the fun if you're interested in reading comments and postings about Fairbank—historical and current. Google the group name, or submit a member request to join at this [link](#).

In July, 2020 I started writing a column for my hometown paper, the *Fairbank Islander*, where interviews with long-time area residents appear. Mail your subscription (\$28/year) to the Fairbank Library, P.O. Box 426, Fairbank, IA 50629.

Does Real Life Show up in Books?

Most mornings I arise early--around 5. I've always been an early riser, but in route to my PC more and more I find myself walking past growing piles of 'stuff' accumulating on the flat surfaces in our home. I'm startled at the sight of them. I can't imagine I haven't put these items in their designated spot or discarded them weeks ago.

My fear is I've turned into my Mother.

And, that's a good thing in most ways. I wrote about her 'south rooms' in our family's book of history, *We Are Eight, a Memoriam* (2015). In all fairness, our family of ten required lots of 'stuff' to keep our household humming—well, read on and you'll understand.



COMING!

**Sequel to
Gangster in Our
Midst:
Winter 2020!**

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“Does Real Life Show up in Books?” (cont.)

Mom referred to the two southern-facing rooms of our house as her ‘south rooms,’ and in them she stored a wide variety of items: canning equipment, furniture, toys, hand-me-down clothing, blue jeans with the knees gone out, awaiting the miracle of a patch and mom’s skilled hands at the wheel of her Singer pedal sewing machine, and so many others...

In 2020, there’s a new name for this: hoarding, characterized by an inability for decision-making, what to keep/toss, etc.

I remember a time when Mom took on the daunting task of going through these items piecemeal, discarding, organizing...until she got the contents down to where only half of a room was needed for storage. The other room then became a playroom for us kids with board games, toys, etc.

The official excuse for MY growing messiness: 1) My husband Clay has had his second knee surgery in twelve months, and I’m his caregiver; 2) 6 weeks ago our bichon was diagnosed with diabetes and has required more of my time; and 3) I’m writing book #4.

Oh, and did I mention everyone in the USA is living with an out-of-control novel coronavirus, and all the extra effort and time that requires?

Still, truth be told...the piles of stuff began growing in 2018 when I was diagnosed with Afib (atrial fibrillation). This was no surprise—Afib is in my family’s DNA. It has left me a changed person.

Back to our dog... When we adopted Miss Butters, 4-5 years old, I was finishing writing *We Are Eight*. She came with an anxiety disorder--understandably (coming from a puppy mill). Initially, to help with bonding, I kept her in a soft new bed at my feet while I typed away on the computer. In a short time she became my shadow and followed me room to room.

Long story shortened...over the next six years, she grew into a happy, contented dog—more so if I was in close proximity, but still she achieved a good quality life. About six weeks ago, her vet diagnosed her with diabetes. Clay and I learned to give insulin shots twice a day, and I ran her into the clinic for glucose curve readings. Cataracts soon obscured her vision, then glaucoma appeared, and finally in her last days, glaucoma pain put her in a frenzied state from which she shouldn’t escape. On August 17, we arranged for Miss Butters to be euthanized at our home, in our loving arms.

So, this has been my life in 2020 as I finish writing/editing book #4, the sequel to *Gangster in Our Midst* (2017). The historical novel (still untitled) will hopefully be available in early winter 2020-21.

“What will this book be about?” I’m increasingly asked.

I’m weaving together stories I gleaned from interviews and research that didn’t make it into *Gangster in Our Midst*, is my response.

If I said more, I’d be giving too much away.

But rest assured, the messiness of real life shows up in this book, as it has in every book I’ve written.



Miss Butters



Thoughts and Prayers for Those Experiencing Loss, an anthology, by Kathryn M. Holmes, including “Black and White, Divorce at Christmas” (poetry) by Betty Brandt Passick

Author Events

(July--December)

All scheduled events have been cancelled due to the coronavirus.

