



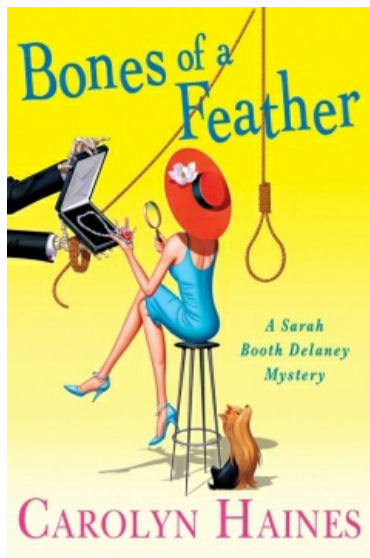
The holiday season can frazzle anyone. Thank goodness for Stephanie's Christmas Baking Night! My niece Jennifer, great-niece Jordan, and I were thrilled to be invited. Check out our elegant headgear as we prepare to make merry.

Dear Friends and Readers,

Christmas is fast upon us, and I feel as if the year has galloped past me. 2010 is almost over—that's just amazing. So many wonderful things have happened this past year, and some losses, too. But let's focus on the good things.

Thanks to all of you, BONE APPETIT made a great showing. In a terrible economy when so many people found buying books to be a luxury that would have to wait, you guys talked up Sarah Booth and the Zinnia gang and drew new readers to the series. Because of you, there will be Bones books in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Just think what trouble Sarah Booth, Tinkie, Jitty, and the others can get into.

This is truly the best gift ever for me—the chance to tell more stories. So thank you.



Do you like the new book jacket for *Bones of a Feather*? And look, [Chablis](#) is on the cover!

BONES OF A FEATHER will be released in June, and we'll have a fun launch party in Natchez. A ghost tour! Last March, we launched DELTA BLUES with a blues band at Ground Zero Blues Club in Clarksdale. Thank goodness some of the writers could play and sing (they turned my microphone off!!!) but we had an insanely fun time, despite my lack of talent in these [YouTube performance clips](#)!

BONEFIRE OF THE VANITIES (working title) is the book for 2012, and I'm writing it now. (Isn't that crazy? But publishing works at least a year in advance.) And for 2013, I don't have a clue yet. One book at a time.

The creative writing department at the University of South Alabama is growing, and we're hiring a new writing teacher for next year. This is great for the students. It's fun to be part of a growing program, and I have some really talented people in my classes. Bright futures there, and writers all of us will be reading in the coming years.

While I'm closing out 2010, I'm also looking to next year, and the line-up of fun events. I'll be in Chicago Feb. 3-6 for [Love Is Murder](#). I'm one of the keynote speakers and I'm teaching a master class on writing, so this will be a lot of fun. I went to this conference a couple of years ago and instigated a snowball fight. Mary Welks realized that this Southern gal didn't have a lot of chances for a snowball fight so she helped me organize a good one. I hope for a repeat of the action this February. There are some fun people attending, and if you're in the area, it will be a blast!

March is [Daddy's Girl Weekend](#) at Gulf Hills Resort in Ocean Springs. E-mail [Sarah Bewley](#) if you want to register for this fabulous weekend. My team of imps (which is growing larger each passing week) is putting together some mischief. I think we are all in need of some fun—it's been a rough time for many in the past few years. So order your peignoir or smoking jacket, as the case may be, and make your plans to attend.

The end of April, I'll be attending the [Malice Domestic](#)



[Sarah Bewley](#) is THE woman to contact if you want to join me for Daddy's Girl Weekend in Ocean Springs, MS. Please come with us.

Ocean Springs, Ala. Please come winter. We'll discuss books, have snackie bits, go shopping, vote in the "Big Daddy" contest, and have drinks!



Introducing Merle Haggard. He really needs you to keep him in your prayers. After suffering an inner ear issue, he's now deaf and his balance is a bit wonky. Please send some positive energy his way. *Meow!*



"Where is Carolyn with my warmed muffler? She's late again. We should fire her."—the thoughts of a spoiled horse.

conference in Washington D.C. It's been a long time since I've been able to attend Malice, but this is another great conference filled with writers and lovers of books.

And in the summer, it will be the launch of BONES OF A FEATHER. All in all, a busy year ahead.

The new website is coming along, and while I had hoped to launch it last month, I simply didn't get the copy written. I did finish the first draft of THE NESTER, which now goes into revisions.

I believe you will love the new website when it's ready. Jitty is getting her own [Dear Jitty advice column](#), and she is receiving some great questions—though she is dispensing advice in areas where she has NO expertise, but that has never stopped Jitty. And if you have friends who don't get my newsletter, ask them to [sign up!](#)

I did want to remind you that BONE APPETIT is up for a [Reader's Choice Award](#) from Romantic Times in the mystery series category, and just recently [DELTA BLUES was selected by the Sun Sentinel](#) as a 2010 favorite in crime fiction.

My critters are doing okay. The cold is hard on Miss Scrapiron, but today the sun is out and the air is balmy and we move toward the solstice (which is also a blue moon by the way, so make some wishes!) when the days will begin to grow longer, and hopefully a bit warmer. It hasn't been a terrible winter here in South Alabama so far, though many people in the Midwest and Northeast are suffering. (I have to turn off the weather channel because I worry so about the livestock in these bitter cold places.)

Think good thoughts for my wonderful cat, Merle Haggard, who suffered an inner ear issue. He's a young cat, but something happened and he lost his equilibrium. Now he's deaf, though his balance is much better. Vets worked night and day to help him, so keep a thought this may get better.

And remember, if you have someone on your Christmas list who has everything, then donate a spay/neuter in their name at a local vet clinic. Almost any vet will take your gift and apply it to someone who needs help keeping a pet healthy. It's a wonderful gift to give.

I hope Santa is good to each and every one of you. I've gotten my Christmas presents every day of the year with your e-mails, facebook comments, and support.

Bring on 2011, I'm rarin' to go!

Love,
Carolyn

2486 Ellen Drive | Semmes, AL 36575
carolynhaines56@gmail.com | carolynhaines.com



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