



I was eager to tear into this awesome cake which was presented by the lovely ladies of Alpha Delta Kappa.



My vet, Lynn Leonard, is wearing the new Sweetie Pie shirt! Like it?



Jitty wants you to read her blog: [Hit the Road, Dear Abby](#)



Dear Friends and Readers,

The first newsletter of the new year! Ain't it funny how time slips away (ah, Willie, you could always sing it). Classes have started, and I have another group of talented students to teach. For those who have never taught, I never anticipated the energy level that teaching requires. There is much hard work, but also much pleasure in seeing someone catch hold of writing elements and just take off.

Over the Christmas holidays, I had food poisoning and so much work to do that I thought I might never see daylight again. Being sick threw me off schedule. Another reminder that I should be thankful each day for my cast iron gut that normally doesn't give me any trouble.

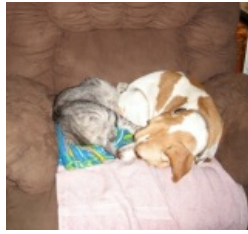
I have ordered new T-shirts, which will be available next week in my [online store](#). Remember, 100% of all proceeds are accepted as donations to the [Good Fortune Farm Refuge](#).

Sarah Bewley has prepared the [Official Flyer](#) for Daddy's Girl weekend which explains what to expect. Let me say once again that while there will be writers and agents and publishers there, you *don't* have to be a writer to attend and have fun. We'll have readers and lots of time to talk about books and characters and the things we love. Click on this [Official Flyer](#) to get the whole scoop!

I've got to get on the stick and start planning the Natchez launch. Another fun outing. I think as I've aged, I realize that most of us just work and work and work. Sometimes, we need a weekend to explore different places and ideas and laugh! Goodness, we really need more laughter.

I would like to invite all of you to my [Facebook Fan Page](#). This won't affect my regular Facebook Page, but the fan page will make some things easier. So if you're a Facebook person, come on over and "like" me.

I'll be heading for Chicago in a few days. The [Love Is Murder conference](#) is Feb. 4-6, so I'll be yakking and teaching and laughing in the Windy City. I attended LIM three years ago and had a blast even though my luggage was lost and there was a snowstorm. Mary Welk, one of the organizers, and I tried to find my luggage in the huge baggage area and explored the bowels of O'Hare airport. We did not succeed, but we had a lot of laughs.



Merle Haggard and Sorrow are asleep in the recliner. Pollux is perched on top of it. There is no place for me to sit!

Last visit to LIM we had a great snowball fight, and if there's snow on the ground, I'll get some photos for you. Some of you have plenty of snow, but us Deep South gals don't often get to play in it.

Alice is also going to New York. We will weigh our luggage and once again, I will win with the lightest bag. Alice has many, many electronic devices. I fear to ask what all they can do. And I'm sure she'll have to pack her favorite steam iron.

Miss Scrapiron is having a tough winter, which makes it tough for me. Marla the foster lab leaves Friday for her new home in Pennsylvania. It makes me sad to see her go, but she has a wonderful new home. Everyone else is hanging tough through the bleak mid-winter. (I'm trying to teach Kinky the cat to type, but she defies all forms of instruction!)

Until next month!

Love,
Carolyn

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