

December 2005 - We kicked off December and the holiday season with a bang. For the past decade plus, we've hosted an annual 'Xmas Opener' come'n'go Christmas cocktail party in our home for family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, new acquaintances and old, from 19 to 90. This year was a record, with attendance for the first time at over 200 (usually ~150) of the finest, fun-loving, frisky-spirited folks you'd ever want to meet, all ready to fa-la-lah the night away. It's an event we love to host, like a real-time Christmas card greeting, and it reminds us how lucky we are to have so many wonderful people in our lives. The next day we tidied up (in a hurry) and caught a flight to Oahu (via a night in Vancouver) for 10 days of sun, sand, plenty of maitais and a celebration of Herb's birthday. Now we're back and in the full swing of a chock full roster of Christmas parties and events. To all of you reading this, I wish you a warm and wonderful holiday season filled with fun and laughter with the people who mean the most to you and a new year bountiful with the good things life has to offer.

November 2005 - Although a little road weary, what a thrill to spend the last week with our neighbours to the south in Ann Arbor, Minneapolis, Chicago and Madison - all such wonderful experiences in their own way - I loved every second of it! Keith, Martin, Lyle, Patrick, Hilary - thank you for your gracious hospitality. Robert and Ellen, as always you have my gratitude and respect (and of course a life-long fan). As always, it's the people you meet along the road of life that make it richer and more worthwhile, and this past week for me was a bonanza.

November 2005 - Thank you Victoria, Thank you Chronicles of Crime Bookstore, Thank you Frances Thorsen - we just returned from the west coast where it was standing room only at the Chronicles of Crime Bookstore on Fort Street in Victoria. Wow - what a wonderful welcome to that city. Not only did proprietor Frances Thorsen have the store's front window decorated in everything Russell Quant and serve home-made (and delicious I might add) sangria to the crowd, but she was dressed as Captain Giovanna Bagnato, the FOD cruise ship captain from Tapas on the Ramblas. Check out some of the photos. It was a jovial, joyous and all around fun time. Holly & Jim - thanks for the currie at the Bengal Room. Bob & Eleanor - thanks for the South African dinner and the coat! Jill - thanks for drinks. Dan & Judy - thanks for the hospitality. Janine - thanks for the hug!

November 2005 - I've been getting the most amazing e-mails through this new website from around the world - the Netherlands, Seattle, New Mexico, Taipei, Nova Scotia and so many more - I love 'em - thank you all!

November 2005 - I had such a blast in Ottawa, being part of the legendary Tree Reading Series and having the opportunity to listen to many of Ottawa's finest read their own material. It is always terrific to return to a city and

reconnect with old friends like David Rimmer of After Stonewall Bookstore, Dick, Dale, James and meet new ones. Thanks for the beer, James.

October 2005 - Floating on air - Last night was the hometown, inaugural launch of Tapas on the Ramblas at McNally Robinson Bookstore in Saskatoon - wow - what a fantastic crowd showed up (check out a few photos from the event in the Photo section). I cannot express my gratitude in enough ways to all the wonderful people who were there, making it such an extraordinary evening - topped off with tapas and sangria served up by the Prairie Ink Restaurant, two spirited flamenco performances, cards, flowers - ohmygosh. For the few I didn't get a chance to say hello to, I did see you, and please accept my sincere thanks now for being there - the support is much appreciated.

October 2005 - Floating on air: Part II - The 13th Annual Saskatchewan Book Awards shortlist was released at a press conference Wednesday, October 19th. Tapas on the Ramblas has been shortlisted for a SBA in the Fiction category. Yahoo!

October 2005 - Russell goes to the islands - Vancouver Island that is - I am very excited to be making my first appearance in Victoria hosted by the wonderful Chronicles of Crime Bookshop - I'll be there Friday, Nov 4, 2005 - check the Events page for further details soon to be finalized.

October 2005 - What's in a Title? The fourth Russell Quant is now in the caring hands of my editor, Catherine Lake. Of all the books, this was the first time I found myself waffling on the title; for a variety of reasons. My first choice, Boogeyman, was already taken by both a book and a movie, the second, Circle Jerky, although boasting a rather cheeky tie-in to one of the story locations sounded, well...it just sounded dirty. The third, Tequila Pigs, I (and Catherine) quite liked, and that's what it was called for a long time, until I was at a local author appearance talking about future projects and as soon as the title came out of my mouth - apparently the first time I was hearing it out loud - it just sounded way wrong for a Russell Quant mystery. Usually I have my title in the bag before I even begin the first draft, and there I was almost on the last one with no title. However I knew the story so well by that point and as I gave the draft a complete readover I was relieved to find my brain spilling out many possibilities that sounded just right and not at all dirty (although there's nothing wrong with that). So, as of right now, the tentative title for Russell Quant #4 is Stain of the Berry.

October 2005 - We have two little dogs, a brown cock-a-poo named Mocha who is perfect in every way, and a black terri-poo named Bali who...isn't. Happy birthday to Bali who turns 10 on Oct. 6.

October 2005 - Code Monkey - He prefers to be called code monkey rather than webmaster, but whatever the name, I give great kudos to Andrew Frappe of TechGuys for listening patiently to my endless suggestions and opinions and doing such a superb job at turning scraps of paper and my blurred vision into this website. I have been receiving an overwhelmingly positive response to this new website and I want to thank all of you for visiting. And for all the messages and letters and calls - I receive each one with great appreciation.