

DEATH RIDES THE ZEPHYR

A MYSTERY



JANET DAWSON

Death Rides the Zephyr _____

MYSTERY FICTION BY JANET DAWSON

THE JERI HOWARD MYSTERY SERIES

Kindred Crimes

Till the Old Men Die

Take a Number

Don't Turn Your Back on the Ocean

Nobody's Child

A Credible Threat

Witness to Evil

Where the Bodies Are Buried

A Killing at the Track

Bit Player

SHORT STORIES

Scam and Eggs

SUSPENSE FICTION

What You Wish For

Death Rides the Zephyr

*Death Rides —
— the Zephyr
— a mystery —*

JANET DAWSON

2013
PERSEVERANCE PRESS / JOHN DANIEL AND COMPANY
PALO ALTO / MCKINLEYVILLE, CALIFORNIA

This is a work of fiction. Characters, places, and events are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to real people, companies, institutions, organizations, or incidents is entirely coincidental.

The interior design and the cover design of this book are intended for and limited to the publisher's first print edition of the book and related marketing display purposes. All other use of those designs without the publisher's permission is prohibited.

Copyright © 2013 by Janet Dawson
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America

A Perseverance Press Book
Published by John Daniel & Company
A division of Daniel & Daniel, Publishers, Inc.
Post Office Box 2790
McKinleyville, California 95519
www.danielpublishing.com/perseverance

Distributed by SCB Distributors (800) 729-6423

Book design by Eric Larson, Studio E Books, Santa Barbara, www.studio-e-books.com

Cover art © Roger Morris, Two Rock Media. All rights reserved.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Dawson, Janet.

Death rides the zephyr : a mystery / by Janet Dawson.

pages cm

ISBN 978-1-56474-530-9 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. California Zephyr (Express train)—Fiction. 2. Railroad travel—Fiction. I. Title.
PS3554.A949D43 2013

813'.54--dc23

2012048733

To Mom, as always

Death Rides the Zephyr _____

Chapter One

THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR seemed alive, poised for movement, waiting on the tracks for the conductor's call of "All aboard!"

Jill McLeod reached up and touched the stainless steel diesel locomotive, one of three powerful engines that would pull the train on the first leg of its eastbound run from Oakland to Chicago. She felt the tingle of anticipation, as she always did when she saw the sleek streamliner at the start of a journey.

The snub-nosed front of the first diesel was painted orange. Rectangular plates on either side of the big, round center headlight bore the engine number, 805-A. The emblem below the headlight was square, with a black background showing the Western Pacific Railroad's feather logo and the legend FEATHER RIVER ROUTE. Orange stripes ran down the sides of the locomotive, with WESTERN PACIFIC in black letters below.

Jill turned and greeted the conductor, who'd been conferring with the engineer and his fireman assistant at the ladder leading up to the cab in the first engine. "Good morning, Mr. Wylie."

"Good morning back at you, Miss McLeod," the conductor said as the engineer climbed back into the cab. "A damp morning it is, for sure."

"It certainly is." Earlier, it had drizzled. The moisture in the air curled the ends of Jill's light brown hair, which she wore in the short, curly style known as a poodle cut.

Fog hugged San Francisco Bay and spilled ashore, blurring buildings in the rail yard, and obscuring Berkeley, Oakland, and the hills to the east. The front half of the *Zephyr* stretched out of

the oversized train shed at the end of the Oakland Mole, the huge pier and causeway extending from the eastern shore into the bay.

Mr. Wylie was a tall, broad-shouldered man in his mid-forties, clothed in the distinctive uniform of his position. On his billed cap a shiny badge read WESTERN PACIFIC CONDUCTOR, and WP pins decorated each lapel of his dark jacket, worn over a white shirt, tie, and vest. A watch on a chain was tucked into his left pocket. His first name was Arthur, but most people knew him as Red, because of his rusty-colored hair.

Not that she would ever address the conductor by his first name or his nickname. Onboard crew members were supposed to keep things on a “Mister and Miss” basis, even though they traveled together often. While on the road, the conductor was in charge of the train. His was the last word.

“Looks like a full train this run,” Mr. Wylie said. “Even if it is just three days till Christmas. Folks are heading home for the holidays.”

“I’ll have my Christmas with my family when I get back from Chicago,” Jill said.

Her holiday celebration would be closer to New Year’s Eve. It was Monday, December 22, 1952. The eastbound *California Zephyr*, train number 18, was due to leave at nine o’clock this morning and scheduled to arrive in the Windy City at one-thirty on the afternoon of December 24th, Christmas Eve. After a two-night layover, Jill would board the westbound *Zephyr*, train number 17, scheduled to depart Chicago in mid-afternoon on December 26th. Barring any complications, she’d get back to Oakland two days later, on the afternoon of December 28th.

Jill lived with her family in the nearby island city of Alameda. Her mother had been teary-eyed this morning, because her oldest child would spend Christmas in a Chicago hotel, away from home during the holidays. So Mom made waffles—Jill’s favorite—for breakfast. Still in her bathrobe, Jill ate with her parents and siblings in their sunny kitchen, pouring hot maple syrup over buttery squares.

After breakfast, her family gave Jill several early Christmas gifts. Her sister Lucy, who was in her senior year at Mills College,

and her brother Drew, a freshman at the University of California in Berkeley, had pooled their resources to buy a book for Jill to read on the train. Mom presented Jill with a red cashmere scarf and matching gloves, the better to stave off that Midwestern cold. Her father gave her a new wallet of soft beige leather, with some greenbacks tucked inside. "So you can have a nice Christmas dinner while you're in Chicago," he said. "Go to the Pump Room. Your mother and I ate there once, before the war, and it was a real treat."

Jill put her arms around him and gave him a kiss. "Thanks, Dad. I will."

"We'll see you when you get back," he said. Then he headed out the door, for his rounds at the Alameda Hospital, where he was a general practitioner.

Jill hugged her mother. "I love the scarf and gloves, Mom. They're beautiful." She turned to her younger siblings. "And thanks for the new Agatha Christie. I can't wait to read the book. It's a Miss Marple. She's my favorite."

Lucy grinned. "You know what they say. 'A Christie for Christmas.'"

"I'd better get dressed," Jill said, gathering up her presents. She went upstairs to the room that had been hers since she'd graduated from the University of California, three years earlier. Sophie, Jill's calico cat, curled up on the bed, her orange, black, and white face tucked under her white paws. Jill leaned over and stroked the cat's silky fur. The cat opened her yellow eyes, then took Jill's hand in her forepaws, kicking gently with her hind paws. Jill tickled the cat's stomach, and Sophie purred. Then she got up and stretched before curling into a ball again.

Jill dressed and put on her makeup. Then she picked up her suitcase and an old carpetbag made of faded blue fabric, containing a few extra items for the trip. "I'm leaving now, Sophie," she told the cat. "Guard the house until I get back." Sophie opened one eye and yawned.

Mr. Wylie's voice brought Jill back to the present. "Got your Christmas shopping done?"

"Most of it," she said. "I plan to pick up stocking stuffers in Chicago. How about you?"

He smiled. "Haven't even started yet. Plenty of time. The stores don't close until five on Christmas Eve."

Jill shook her head. "What is it about men? My father's the same. He waits until the last possible minute to do his shopping."

"That's what my wife says. She starts buying presents in the middle of the summer."

The brakeman approached them. He was the crew member who assisted the conductor onboard and applied and released handbrakes. He said hello to Jill before turning to ask Mr. Wylie a question. Jill stepped away. She had plenty to do before the train left.

She walked alongside the three locomotives. The consist—the rail cars that made up the train—began with these engines. The *California Zephyr* was the joint operation of three railroads—the Western Pacific, the Denver & Rio Grande Western, and the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. The cars that followed the engines, built by the Budd Company in Pennsylvania, were a mix of equipment from all three roads, with the exception of the transcontinental sleeper, which belonged to the Pennsylvania Railroad. The exterior of each car had the legend CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR centered over the windows, and below the windows, the individual car's name. The sparkling, newly washed stainless steel cars, all with "Silver" in their names, gave the train its other title—the Silver Lady.

The baggage car, the Silver Stag, was coupled to the third locomotive. She waved to the baggage man, who stood near his folding desk and equipment locker. Then a long black hearse drove slowly up the platform and parked with its rear doors facing the baggage car's double doors. Two men got out of the vehicle and opened the hearse, revealing four coffins inside. The baggage handler jumped down from the car. The men consulted over the paperwork. Then the baggage man wheeled over the special cart that raised and lowered, especially for loading coffins in the baggage car. The men from the funeral home began unloading the coffins onto the cart, preparing to transfer them to the train.

Jill took a deep breath and held it for a moment, then expelled air in a sigh. A week earlier, the McLeods' neighbors in

Alameda had been overjoyed when their son, a soldier in Korea, had been discharged and sent home, arriving in time for the holidays. These servicemen were going home as well. But they were making their final journey in the train's baggage car, their coffins covered with American flags.

How sad to lose a loved one during the holidays, Jill thought. How sad to lose someone you love at any time of the year.

She walked around the hearse. When she came to the first passenger car, the Silver Pony, she climbed the steps up to the vestibule. This was one of three chair cars in the consist. The other two were the Silver Palace and the Silver Saddle. Each car had seating for over sixty coach passengers. On the upper level of each car was the Vista-Dome, a glass compartment rising out of the roof, with seating for the coach passengers. The Vista-Dome's front, rear, and side walls were windows, with curved glass providing unobstructed views of scenery. At night, only floor lighting illuminated the Dome, allowing clear views of the night sky. The *California Zephyr* touted the train's Vista-Domes in its advertisements and brochures, frequently using the tag line, "Look up, look down, look all around."

The cars with Vista-Domes had what was called a depressed floor under the dome, lower than the rest of the car, with two steps on either side leading down to this level. On the chair cars, the men's and women's washrooms were here, under the Vista-Dome, each with toilets and sinks for the coach passengers. Inspecting the women's washrooms in the public areas of the train was part of Jill's pre-departure routine, so she stepped inside and looked around, finding the washroom clean.

Another part of her routine was putting up her name cards, which identified her as a member of the crew. She took a card from her skirt pocket and slipped it into the holder on the wall. Then she greeted the coach attendant and left the Silver Pony, heading back to the second car, the Silver Palace. This car was slightly different. It contained the conductor's office, a compartment at the right side on the rear of the car, with a bench seat and a desk.

She said hello to the coach attendant for the Silver Palace,

then checked the washroom and placed her name card, repeating the actions in the third chair car, the Silver Saddle. Then she entered the Silver Hostel, the buffet-lounge car. At the front of the car she glanced into the washroom, finding it clean, as she expected. She kept walking down the central aisle of the car's coffee shop, which served hot food, snacks, and beverages. The passageway jogged to the right and then left, down the steps, and ran alongside the wall of the lounge. Jill greeted the steward, who was behind the bar, checking glassware and bottles, ready to dispense beverages, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. Behind him was a small kitchen.

Just beyond the entrance to the lounge were another two steps up, then a curved staircase led up to the Vista-Dome above the lounge. At the foot of the stairs, on Jill's left, a closed door led to the crew dormitory, with space for fifteen crew members, bunks stacked three high, lockers, and a washroom with toilets and showers.

Jill's compartment was at the end of the car, next to that of the dining car steward. The narrow space contained a bench seat that folded down into a bed, a toilet, and a washstand that was pulled down from the wall, then pushed up again when not in use. This served as her quarters for the two-and-a-half-day journey to Chicago. Earlier, she had stowed her suitcase and the blue cloth bag, along with the first-aid kit she'd picked up when she'd arrived at the rail yard.

Jill went through to the dining car, the Silver Plate, and stepped into a hive of activity. Crew members had arrived before dawn, loading supplies from the commissary building into the diner before the train was moved from the yard to the Mole. The pantry was packed with a vast array of food and beverages, enough to feed passengers and crew on the train's eastward journey to Chicago. The train carried crockery, glassware, silver service and kitchen equipment, and linens. Now the *Zephyr's* chefs were in the diner's stainless steel kitchen, menus planned, ready to prepare those meals.

Jill walked down the passageway that ran alongside the wall of the stainless steel kitchen and pantry, where chefs in white

uniforms, aprons, and caps were already preparing for lunch. In the dining section, six waiters in white jackets had covered each of the tables with fresh white cloths and set them with Western Pacific china, heavy silverware, and glasses. Each table held a full water bottle, a silver stand holding the menu, and a bud vase containing a red carnation, and in keeping with the holiday season, a spray of holly. Now they talked among themselves as they waited for departure.

"I seen you over at Slim Jenkins's club last night," one waiter said to another. "Who was that fine-lookin' woman you was with?"

"None of your business," the other man said. "You find your own woman and don't be asking about mine."

The other waiters laughed, and one of them said, "That's telling him, Lester. Morning, Miss McLeod."

She waved at them. "Good morning."

Marcus Gridley, the dining car steward, looked up from his curved counter in the center of the car. The base of the counter was decorated with a mural of carved linoleum, showing an auburn-haired woman in Grecian draperies, seated in a pastoral scene, a bunch of grapes in her hand and more grapes in the basket on her lap.

"Good morning, Miss McLeod," the steward said. "It looks like we have a full house this trip, with people traveling during the holiday season."

"Yes, we do, Mr. Gridley. I hope it will be an uneventful trip." He smiled. "You and me both."

Jill walked back through the Pullman cars—the Silver Gull, the Silver Palisade, the Silver Pine, and the Silver Rapids—where the sleeping car porters were giving the accommodations one last inspection before the passengers arrived. In each car, she greeted the porters and placed her name cards in the wall holders.

The last car in the train, the Silver Solarium, was an observation-sleeper, with three double bedrooms suitable for two passengers each, as well as a drawing room that could accommodate three people. All four accommodations had enclosed toilet facilities.

Todd Parsons, the porter, wasn't in his tiny compartment at

the front of the car, opposite the electrical locker and a toilet. Jill walked past the bedrooms and took two steps down to the depressed level under the Vista-Dome, where a glass partition looked in on the car's buffet, which provided beverages and a limited menu during the journey. Mr. Parsons was in the small bar, his reflection visible in the mirror etched with a design of birds and branches. The curved counter where he stood was similar to the one in the dining car, with a carved linoleum base. This mural showed plump white birds on a sky blue background.

"Good morning, Mr. Parsons," Jill said.

He looked up. "Morning, Miss McLeod. Ready to go to Chicago?"

"Ready as I'll ever be. How about you?"

"Looking forward to it," he said. "I've got family on the South Side, so I'm spending Christmas with them. Heading back here to Oakland in a few days."

"Me, too," Jill said. "Maybe we'll be on the same train. We'll have 'specials' on this train, all of them back here in the Solarium."

"Yes, ma'am. Got a full house this trip. Seven people, taking all three bedrooms and the drawing room."

The "specials" were "special attention passengers," usually prominent people who had come to the notice of the railroad when they'd booked their accommodations. As such, they were singled out for extra attention from the crew. These passengers might be traveling anywhere on the train; for this trip, the people in question were all traveling on the Silver Solarium. According to the information Jill had received when she'd checked in this morning, three of these passengers would board the train here at the Oakland Mole, after arriving on the ferry from San Francisco. The other four would board in Oakland, at the Western Pacific station at Third and Washington.

"I'll be back to meet the passengers once we get underway," Jill said.

She walked up two steps to the main level, past a small water fountain tucked into a space at her left. Here another set of steps led up to the car's Vista-Dome. These stairs curved slightly, and were edged with Lucite that glowed at night with muted lighting.

In the lounge, comfortable chairs upholstered in sandalwood and brown—five on one side and four on the other—ranged along the sides of the car, which had a rounded end known as a “fish tail.” The flowered carpet was tan and beige. Venetian blinds and curtains covered the windows on either side of the car. In the middle of the lounge, within reach of passengers who would sit there, were small, round metal tables with recessed holders for glasses around the perimeter and ashtrays in the middle. At the very back of the car, two settees, each wide enough for two people, faced the car’s rear double door. On either side of the door were two small tables built into the sides of the car, just big enough to hold a glass or two. The table on the right held a silver tinsel Christmas tree, about eighteen inches tall, decorated with red and green glass balls and a gold star.

Both this lounge—and the Vista-Dome at the top of the stairs, with seating for twenty-four people—were available for the use of all the sleeping car passengers. Just to the right of the stairs a writing desk held stationery and postcards for the passengers’ use, as well as newspapers for them to read. Multiple copies of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Examiner* had been delivered to the train before it left the coach yards. The papers were distributed through the cars, including this one.

Jill glanced at the front page. The largest headline was about an explosion at a chemical factory in Japan. There was also a photo and article about the opening of the new Broadway Tunnel in San Francisco the day before. Evidently sightseers had turned out in droves.

She picked up the *Chronicle* and leafed through the first few pages. The death toll in that terrible plane crash had gone up to eighty-six. Two days earlier, on December 20th, an Air Force C-124 cargo and troop transport plane had crashed at Larson Air Force Base in Moses Lake, Washington. Most of the passengers were Air Force personnel from Korea or Northwest bases, catching a ride home for Christmas in a program called Operation Sleigh Ride.

Their poor families, she thought, remembering the coffins being loaded onto the baggage car. She turned the pages of the newspaper, scanning the articles.

On page 8, in the upper right corner, she saw a headline. POLICE BAR ROSENBERG RALLY AT SING SING. She read through the article. A delegation of over seven hundred people seeking clemency for Julius and Ethel Rosenberg had traveled by train to Ossining, New York, site of Sing Sing Prison. But the local police had kept them from marching to the prison. Instead, they'd marched near the train station. The Rosenbergs, charged with passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union, had been convicted and sentenced to death in the spring of 1951. In October 1952, the United States Supreme Court had ruled against reviewing the case. Now the couple's execution was set for the week of January 11, 1953.

Mr. Parsons came into the lounge. He glanced at the newspaper and pointed at the article. "Those Rosenbergs, d'you think they're really going to the electric chair?"

"Looks like it," Jill said. "It's scheduled for next month. Though I suppose it could be delayed again."

"Don't know what to think about that. Lots of folks think they're not guilty."

"Lots of folks think they are guilty." Jill recalled the discussions her mother and father had had on the subject. Certainly those hundreds of people who had gone to Sing Sing yesterday thought the Rosenbergs were innocent.

She turned the pages, until another headline caught her eye. This one was an editorial. NO ROMANCE IN MODERN WAR. Jill closed the paper and put it back on the writing desk. She didn't think there was ever any romance in war.

Jill had things to do. The passengers would be arriving soon and she wouldn't have a moment to relax until the train was well on its way. She placed one last name card in the wall holder. Then she returned to the Silver Solarium's vestibule and stepped down to the platform inside the huge, echoing Oakland Mole, where the train waited for its passengers. She walked to the rounded end of the observation car, where a small rectangular sign stood out on the car's stainless steel skin. CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR glowed in yellow neon letters against an orange background showing an outline of the Golden Gate Bridge.

A group of Red Caps, the railroad station porters who wore distinctive red headgear, waited for the onslaught of arriving passengers. They gathered around a radio playing what some people called race music, but Jill knew it as rhythm and blues. She recognized the song, Ernie Andrews singing "Pork Chops and Mustard Greens." Her brother, Drew, loved R&B and ever since the record came out last year, he played it constantly.

Then voices drowned out the music, echoing off the Mole's high roof. Passengers from the East Bay cities had the option to board the *Zephyr* here at the ferry terminus, or at the train's first stop, the Western Pacific station located at Third and Washington in Oakland. People had already arrived here by car and bus. Jill saw men in Navy uniforms, not surprising with the Naval Air Station located in Alameda. An officer in dress blues approached, walking arm in arm with a redheaded woman whose knee-length blue coat matched his uniform. Behind them, a little blond girl dawdled, clutching an overnight case and a teddy bear. A young sailor in bell-bottomed trousers hurried past Jill, carrying a duffel bag on his left shoulder. He saw the officer and stopped, snapping a salute. The officer returned the salute and the sailor continued toward one of the Dome chair cars.

Out on San Francisco Bay, a foghorn bellowed its warning. A moment later, Jill heard another horn, signaling the approach of the double-decker ferry from San Francisco.

She quickened her pace and walked to a spot a few yards beyond the end of the Silver Solarium. Here she joined the Pullman conductor, Mr. Alford, who supervised the porters and had overall charge of the sleeping cars. The porters were employed by the Pullman Company rather than the railroads. Now, as the passengers arrived, he would check in those with sleeping accommodations, while Jill greeted people, providing assistance and directions as needed.

The horn sounded again as the ferry docked. Mr. Alford straightened his cap. "Ready, Miss McLeod?"

Jill nodded. "I'm ready, Mr. Alford. Here they come."

Chapter 7

THE FLOOD BEGAN. Passengers disembarked at both levels of the ferry, then hurried down the gangplank toward the train. The platform bustled with activity. Red Caps took suitcases, bags, and packages, carrying them to the coach and sleeper cars, or stowing them on carts for transport to the baggage car. Passengers converged on the train, talking, laughing, intent on finding the cars in which they'd be traveling.

A family of five came by, a mother, a father, and three children giggling as they sang that Christmas song that was so popular this year, "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus." Then their voices faded. Other passengers streamed past Jill, their voices and fragments of conversation replacing the lyrics of the song.

"I'm looking forward to Aunt Millie's mince pie," a woman told her male companion.

"Yeah, it's the best." He laughed as they both hurried past, carrying overnight cases and wrapped packages.

"If we get the contract, we can start work in April," one man said to another. "We'll discuss it on the train and I'll send him a wire when we get to Sacramento."

"...and Johnny Ray," a teenaged girl said to another. "I just love it when he sings 'Cry.' It makes me swoon!"

"Oh, I think he's drippy," her friend said. "I like Eddie Fisher better."

A growing line of passengers queued in front of Mr. Alford, checking in for the sleeping accommodations. The Pullman conductor smiled as he held out his hand. "Good morning, sir. May I check your reservations, please?" The man handed over his

AUTHOR'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Death Rides the Zephyr required a great deal of research—train trips, interviews, and lots of time spent climbing around on old railroad cars. I even took a locomotive for a spin.

When writing about a historical period or a particular subject, I strive to be accurate in conveying information. I worked hard to make this book as accurate as possible, though I may have tweaked facts from time to time for the sake of plot, characters, and a good story. Any errors are my own.

Many thanks to Camille Minichino for explaining theoretical physics to this layperson.

My heartfelt thanks go to two of the Zephyrettes who worked aboard the historical streamliner known as the *California Zephyr*. Cathy Moran Von Ibsch was a Zephyrette in the late 1960s and rode the Silver Lady on her last run. Rodna Walls Taylor rode the rails as a Zephyrette in the early 1950s, the time period of the book. I greatly appreciate their generosity in answering my many questions. I couldn't have written this book without them.

In 2010 I was a passenger on a special excursion train to and from Portola, California, via the Feather River Canyon. My thanks to Fred Isaac for helping me make this journey. The famed and scenic Feather River Route was part of the Western Pacific Railroad portion of the *California Zephyr*. I took advantage of this wonderful opportunity to see what the passengers of the original CZ saw on their journey through the Sierra Nevada. This route has been primarily traversed by freight traffic since the old CZ ceased operations, so traveling the canyon on a passenger car was a treat. My accommodations for that trip were aboard the Pacific Sands, a 1950 Budd 10/6 Pullman sleeper built for the Union Pacific, a car very much like those that traveled on the CZ.

Several of my fellow Pacific Sands passengers and I have

since referred to ourselves as the Pullman Pals and we've taken another trip aboard the car. So here's to the Pullman Pals: Roger Morris, Glenn Stocki, Leland House, and Nancy Struck. Particular thanks go to Roger Morris and Glenn Stocki, both railfans, who have been quick to answer my many train-related questions, and thanks again to Roger for the wonderful cover art.

I would also like to thank Doug Spinn, owner of the Pacific Sands, for those wonderful trips aboard this vintage Pullman sleeper. Learning firsthand the layout of a Pullman car was important in writing this book. The car is part of the LA Rail consortium of private rail cars. Read more about it at the LA Rail website: <http://www.larail.com/cars/pacificsands.html>.

Thanks to Roy J. Wullich II, owner of the Silver Solarium, for tours of this vintage dome observation car from the original *California Zephyr*; the dome chair car, the Silver Lariat; and the transcontinental sleeper, the Silver Rapids. Find out more at the Rail Journeys West website: <http://www.railjourneyswest.com/silversolarium.html>.

We are fortunate to have railroad museums to preserve the remaining artifacts of this country's rail era, particularly the streamliners like the *California Zephyr*. Both the California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento, California, and the Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, Colorado, have excellent research libraries as well as rail cars and locomotives. The Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California, is a treasure house of rolling stock.

The California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento is part of the state's extensive park system. I would like to thank Cara J. Randall, Librarian, and Kathryn Santos, Archivist, at the museum's library. Thanks also go to two people from the State Department of Parks and Recreation: Pati Brown, District Services Manager, Capital District State Museums and Historic Parks; and Phil Sexton, Director of Public Programs, Sacramento History and Railroad Sector. To find out more about this wonderful museum, here is the website: <http://www.csrmf.org>. Plan a trip to Sacramento, go to Old Town, and climb around on locomotives and rail cars, including a sleeper car that moves and a dining car with tables set with railway china.

At the Colorado Railroad Museum, my thanks go to Kenton Forrest, Archivist, and Kathy McCardwell, Archivist and Librarian, at the Robert W. Richardson Railroad Library, which is located on the museum site. To find out more, go to: <http://coloradorailroadmuseum.org>. Pay a visit and climb around on the trains.

Thank you to Gail McClure and Loren Ross, two of the “willing people” at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California. This museum dedicated to the WP is the location of several cars in my fictional train consist, including WP locomotive 805-A; the Silver Hostel, the dome lounge car; and the Silver Plate, the dining car. The WPRM is also the site of the Run-A-Locomotive program, and I highly recommend it. Read more about it at <http://www.wplives.org>.

Thanks also to Eugene Vicknair, *Zephyr* Project Manager of the Feather River Rail Society. Find out more about this organization dedicated to preserving the history of the Western Pacific Railroad, at <http://www.wplives.org/frs.html>.

The Internet provides a wealth of resources, including boards and listservs for dedicated railfans. Among these are Train Orders at <http://www.trainorders.com>. Many thanks to Bruce Yelen, who provided me with first-hand knowledge of the inside of a *California Zephyr* dome observation car, having worked on the restoration of the Silver Crescent at the Gold Coast Railroad Museum in Miami, Florida. For more information on that car, see <http://gcrm.org/index.php/exhibits/silver-crescent>.

My thanks to several members of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Yahoo group for answering my questions about train operations on the Main Line Through the Rockies. These include Jerry Day, Jimmy Blouch, John Templeton, Duane Cook, Tom Krummell, Bob Huddleston, and Glenn Leasure.

I recommend the *California Zephyr* Virtual Museum at <http://calzephyr.railfan.net>. Here I found old timetables, menus, and brochures, as well as information on the Zephyrettes.

The Amtrak version of the *California Zephyr* is not the same as the sleek Silver Lady of days gone by. But it's great to ride a train through most of the same route, getting an up-close look at this marvelous country. The journey may take longer, but the scenery

is spectacular and the relaxation factor is 110 percent. Besides, unless you hike in, there's no other way to see Gore Canyon.

The *California Zephyr* story, and that of railroading in America, is told in books and films. Some of them are listed below, along with other sources I used in writing *Death Rides the Zephyr*. Many of these books are full of photographs and first-hand accounts of working on and aboard the trains.

PUBLICATIONS:

Portrait of a Silver Lady: The Train They Called the California Zephyr, Bruce A. McGregor and Ted Benson, Pruett Publishing Company, Boulder, CO, 1977. Full of beautiful photographs, lots of history and technical information, and first-hand accounts of what it was like to work on this train.

CZ: The Story of the California Zephyr, Karl R. Zimmerman, Quadrant Press, Inc., 1972. Excellent overview of the train's history, with lots of old photographs.

Zephyr: Tracking a Dream Across America, Henry Kisor, Adams Media Corporation, 1994. An account of Kisor's journey westward on the Amtrak *California Zephyr*.

Waiting on a Train: The Embattled Future of Passenger Rail Service, James McCommons, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2009. A thought-provoking account of the author's travels on various Amtrak routes and his interviews with passengers, employees, rail advocates, and people in the railroad business, with discussions about the future of passenger rail in the United States.

A Guidebook to Amtrak's California Zephyr, Eva J. Hoffman, Flashing Yellow Guidebooks, Evergreen, CO, 2003, 2008. There are three volumes: Chicago to Denver, Denver to Salt Lake City, Salt Lake City to San Francisco. I discovered these courtesy of a railfan while riding the Amtrak *CZ*. A detailed milepost-by-milepost guide to what's outside the train window, with history and anecdotes thrown in. A useful resource for finding out how far it is from one place to another and how long it takes to get there.

Rising from the Rails, Pullman Porters and the Making of the Black Middle Class, Larry Tye, Henry Holt & Company, 2004. There is

also a PBS video. The book discusses the history of the Pullman Company, African Americans working on the railroad, and their legacy.

The Pullman Porters and West Oakland, Thomas and Wilma Tramble, Arcadia Publishing, 2007. A look at the lives of porters in Oakland, California. Full of wonderful photographs.

Readers familiar with the Rosenberg case will note that Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were actually executed on June 19, 1953. At the time the novel takes place, the execution date had been set for January 11, 1953. The Rosenbergs were granted a stay of execution on January 10. Several more dates were set and postponed before the executions were actually carried out.

The information on David Greenglass, Ethel Rosenberg's brother, his activities at Los Alamos, and his role in the espionage trial come from *The Brother, the Untold Story of Atomic Spy David Greenglass and How He Sent his Sister, Ethel Rosenberg, to the Electric Chair*, by Sam Roberts, Random House, 2001.

For an excellent overview of what it was like at Los Alamos, New Mexico during the Manhattan Project, I recommend *109 East Palace: Robert Oppenheimer and the Secret City of Los Alamos*, Jennet Conant, Simon & Schuster, 2006.

Information on the Korean War comes from *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War*, David Halberstam, Hyperion, 2007. The story of how Gunnison, Colorado quarantined itself during the 1918–1919 Spanish Flu epidemic can be found in *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History*, John M. Barry, Viking Penguin, 2004.

FILMS:

The California Zephyr: The Story of America's Most Talked About Train, Copper Media, 1999.

The California Zephyr: Silver Thread Through the West, Travel-VideoStore, 2007.

The California Zephyr: The Ultimate Fan Trip, Emery Gulash, Green Frog Productions, Ltd., 2007.

American Experience: Streamliners: America's Lost Trains, PBS Video, 2006.

Promotional films from the CZ and other trains are viewable on YouTube.

The original *California Zephyr* appeared on film in the 1954 movie *Cinerama Holiday*, as well as the 1952 noir *Sudden Fear*, starring Joan Crawford and Jack Palance. During the train portion of that movie, a Zephyrette comes to Joan Crawford's bedroom to tell her it's time for her dinner reservation. That Zephyrette is Rodna Walls, whom I interviewed for this book.

I hope you enjoyed *Death Rides the Zephyr*. Now go ride a train!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Janet Dawson has written ten books about Oakland private eye Jeri Howard, including *Kindred Crimes*, winner of the St. Martin's Press/Private Eye Writers of America contest for Best First PI Novel, and a nominee for several Best First awards. Her most recent Jeri Howard book is *Bit Player*, which was nominated for a Golden Nugget award for Best California Mystery.

Dawson has also written two stand-alone mystery novels, plus a number of short stories, including a Shamus nominee and a Macavity winner. A past president of Norcal MWA, she lives in the East Bay region, and works for Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Dawson welcomes visitors at www.janetdawson.com and at her blogs.



More Traditional Mysteries from Perseverance Press

For the New Golden Age

Albert A. Bell, Jr.

PLINY THE YOUNGER SERIES

Death in the Ashes

ISBN 978-1-56474-532-3

The Eyes of Aurora (forthcoming)

ISBN 978-1-56474-549-1

Jon L. Breen

Eye of God

ISBN 978-1-880284-89-6

Taffy Cannon

ROXANNE PRESCOTT SERIES

Guns and Roses

Agatha and Macavity awards nominee, Best Novel

ISBN 978-1-880284-34-6

Blood Matters

ISBN 978-1-880284-86-5

Open Season on Lawyers

ISBN 978-1-880284-51-3

Paradise Lost

ISBN 978-1-880284-80-3

Laura Crum

GAIL MCCARTHY SERIES

Moonblind

ISBN 978-1-880284-90-2

Chasing Cans

ISBN 978-1-880284-94-0

Going, Gone

ISBN 978-1-880284-98-8

Barnstorming

ISBN 978-1-56474-508-8

Jeanne M. Dams

HILDA JOHANSSON SERIES

Crimson Snow

ISBN 978-1-880284-79-7

Indigo Christmas

ISBN 978-1-880284-95-7

Murder in Burnt Orange

ISBN 978-1-56474-503-3

Janet Dawson

JERI HOWARD SERIES

Bit Player

Golden Nugget Award nominee

ISBN 978-1-56474-494-4

Cold Trail (forthcoming)

ISBN 978-1-56474-555-2

What You Wish For

ISBN 978-1-56474-518-7

Death Rides the Zephyr

ISBN 978-1-56474-530-9

Kathy Lynn Emerson

LADY APPLETON SERIES

Face Down Below the Banqueting House

ISBN 978-1-880284-71-1

Face Down Beside St. Anne's Well

ISBN 978-1-880284-82-7

Face Down O'er the Border

ISBN 978-1-880284-91-9

Elaine Flinn

MOLLY DOYLE SERIES

Deadly Vintage

ISBN 978-1-880284-87-2

Sara Hoskinson Frommer

JOAN SPENCER SERIES

Her Brother's Keeper

ISBN 978-1-56474-525-5

Hal Glatzer

KATY GREEN SERIES

Too Dead To Swing

ISBN 978-1-880284-53-7

A Fugue in Hell's Kitchen

ISBN 978-1-880284-70-4

The Last Full Measure

ISBN 978-1-880284-84-1

Margaret Grace

MINIATURE SERIES

Mix-up in Miniature

ISBN 978-1-56474-510-1

Madness in Miniature (forthcoming)

ISBN 978-1-56474-543-9

Wendy Hornsby

MAGGIE MACGOWEN SERIES

In the Guise of Mercy

ISBN 978-1-56474-482-1

The Paramour's Daughter

ISBN 978-1-56474-496-8

The Hanging

ISBN 978-1-56474-526-2

The Color of Light (forthcoming)

ISBN 978-1-56474-542-2

Diana Killian

POETIC DEATH SERIES

Docketful of Poesy

ISBN 978-1-880284-97-1

Janet LaPierre

PORT SILVA SERIES

Baby Mine

ISBN 978-1-880284-32-2

Keepers

Shamus Award nominee, Best Paperback Original

ISBN 978-1-880284-44-5

Death Duties

ISBN 978-1-880284-74-2

Family Business

ISBN 978-1-880284-85-8

Run a Crooked Mile

ISBN 978-1-880284-88-9

Hailey Lind

ART LOVER'S SERIES

Arsenic and Old Paint

ISBN 978-1-56474-490-6

Lev Raphael

NICK HOFFMAN SERIES

Tropic of Murder

ISBN 978-1-880284-68-1

Hot Rocks

ISBN 978-1-880284-83-4

Lora Roberts

BRIDGET MONTROSE SERIES

Another Fine Mess

ISBN 978-1-880284-54-4

SHERLOCK HOLMES SERIES

The Affair of the Incognito Tenant

ISBN 978-1-880284-67-4

Rebecca Rothenberg

BOTANICAL SERIES

The Tumbleweed Murders

(completed by Taffy Cannon)

ISBN 978-1-880284-43-8

Sheila Simonson

LATOUCHE COUNTY SERIES

Buffalo Bill's Defunct

WILLA Award, Best Softcover Fiction

ISBN 978-1-880284-96-4

An Old Chaos

ISBN 978-1-880284-99-5

Beyond Confusion

ISBN 978-1-56474-519-4

Shelley Singer

JAKE SAMSON & ROSIE VICENTE SERIES

Royal Flush

ISBN 978-1-880284-33-9

Lea Wait

SHADOWS ANTIQUES SERIES

Shadows of a Down East Summer

ISBN 978-1-56474-497-5

Shadows on a Cape Cod Wedding

ISBN 1-978-56474-531-6

Shadows on a Maine Christmas

(forthcoming)

ISBN 978-1-56474-531-6

Eric Wright

JOE BARLEY SERIES

The Kidnapping of Rosie Dawn

Barry Award, Best Paperback Original. Edgar,

Ellis, and Anthony awards nominee

ISBN 978-1-880284-40-7

Nancy Means Wright

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SERIES

Midnight Fires

ISBN 978-1-56474-488-3

The Nightmare

ISBN 978-1-56474-509-5

REFERENCE/MYSTERY WRITING

Kathy Lynn Emerson

How To Write Killer Historical Mysteries:

The Art and Adventure of Sleuthing

Through the Past

Agatha Award, Best Nonfiction. Anthony and

Macavity awards nominee

ISBN 978-1-880284-92-6

Carolyn Wheat

How To Write Killer Fiction:

The Funhouse of Mystery & the Roller

Coaster of Suspense

ISBN 978-1-880284-62-9

Available from your local bookstore
or from Perseverance Press/John Daniel & Company
(800) 662-8351 or www.danielpublishing.com/perseverance