

The many facets of Elizabeth Pou: Crime Fiction Lover and 'City Mouse' (continued)

by Carol Gillen

Elizabeth started her own consulting practice for small and mid-sized companies in the mid-90s. She explains, "I raised the question: 'How good are company leaders at making their employees feel connected to the organization?' I then showed management how they could better achieve this goal."

Deciding to return to North Carolina in 2003, she considered Wilmington and Durham, ultimately settling here because she 'fell in love with the mountains' and loved the diversity and vibrancy of city life. She was soon teaching crime fiction classes at OLLI, focusing on books.

In 2006, seeking change and to 'get outside her comfort zone,' she applied to the Peace Corps. Posted to Armenia for two years, she focused on small business development there. Armenia had been in the Soviet system for four generations, so people running businesses needed help with entrepreneurial skills.

On returning to Asheville in 2009, Elizabeth rejoined OLLI and enrolled in many different courses. She started teaching again, focusing on a wider range of crime fiction. In expanding the scope of her classes, Elizabeth says, "I started to explore and teach about crime fiction subgenres, including film noir, New York crime stories, books and movies about lawyers, crimes in Florida."

Elizabeth explains that the purpose of her classes is not to have in-depth literary critiques but to provide entertainment as well as information that may be new to the participants. She explores the contrast between book and movie, as well as the backgrounds of producers, screenwriters, directors and stars involved in the movie. She likes books that have lots of visuals, what she calls 'cinematic stories.'

She says, "I love teaching. I once taught a class with a woman who had never before read a crime fiction book. At the end she said I had introduced her to a whole new level of reading! This was a big plus for me, when I realized I could open up someone's eyes to something new!"

This multifaceted woman has also worked with SCORE, helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals. She especially enjoys working with artists, to help them figure out successful ways to make a living in their chosen fields. Fall, 2018, she is teaching 'The Business of Art and Craft in Asheville.'

Elizabeth Pou certainly exemplifies creative retirement in North Carolina! Welcome home.