

# THE MARCH OF CRIME

**MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA — SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER**

## **Q&A: Joan Hansen**

### **Hanging With the Men of Mystery**

*Joan Hansen loves to read. She loves authors. And she's made a name for herself and the events that she founded—Men of Mystery and the Festival of Women Authors—from it. Last year MWA gave her its Raven Award for outstanding achievement in the mystery field outside of creative writing. She recently spoke with Eric Stone.*

ES: How many people were at Men of Mystery last year?

JH: We had 65 authors the year before and that was too many. So this year we cut back to 50. There were 15 new guys. That way we could have 500 to 550 attendees with them. Even though it's big, it still has some feeling of intimacy.

Why only male authors?

I had been doing the women's festival for a few years and I

wanted to do something with men that wouldn't compete with my own other event. I saw a calendar called "Men of Mystery" with photos of hunky writers and asked if I could use the name. I've got a committee to help, but I still do most of the work myself. To know that I've created something original that everyone likes so much, is very gratifying.

We do have a couple of mystery writers at my women's event, but it's more general interest. Gayle Lynds will be at this year's event. But it's smaller, about 150 people.

What differences do you see between male and female mystery authors?



The men are more noir and hardboiled, some of them are pretty graphic. We don't have that so much with women writers. One of my new guys though, his thing is teddy bears. He was a negotiator with SWAT

teams, a tough position, but his character is a teddy bear collector, so you never know. But even the hardboiled ones, when you hear them at the event, they are fun and funny and you'd never know they wrote like that. Also, men aren't usually as descriptive. They don't paint as

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## **The President's Rap Sheet**

Thanks to all of you many generous offers to who made our Holiday Party at La Marina Inn in Playa del Rey such a delight.

Response to our meeting next month at Taix Restaurant has been enthusiastic. President-elect Les Klinger informs me that he has received

being resurrected at The Mystery Bookstore, Westwood, 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 5, and thereafter on every first Monday of each month. In this program, two volunteer active members make themselves available to tutor aspiring writers for a single evening.

For further information, contact Gay Kinman, [gtkinman@juno.com](mailto:gtkinman@juno.com). We are putting together a committee to recommend new ways to reach out to the public. The schedule of regular meetings for 2007 has been set, thanks to the

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Joan Hansen Continued)*

many word pictures. They go more for plot than character. There are exceptions, like Michael Connelly.

The Festival of Women Authors focuses on “literary fiction.” What’s the difference?

The suspense within the writing. Also, in literary fiction the feelings and emotions are more important than the plot. This year at the Women’s Festival we’re having Susan Kandel. The mystery in her books is kind of incidental. They are mystery plots, but she writes in a literary manner. She could almost be a literary writer.

A lot of the women want to be labeled mystery writers because they think they’ll sell better. The best selling women writers are the romance writers, who we don’t have at the Women’s Festival, but next to that it’s mysteries.

You never know how people will categorize their books. I wanted Clive Cussler to come [to Men of Mystery] but he said he doesn’t write mysteries, he writes adventure.

Who’s on your wish list to speak at Men of Mystery?

I’m looking at Lee Child. I would love to have Carl Hiaasen, I think he’d be a riot. I almost had Dave Barry, but I’m afraid he might overshadow everybody. I want quality writers, great speakers, but who won’t overpower everyone else. I want it to be an event of value to everybody and I want all the guys to sell a bunch of books. I wouldn’t ask the Da Vinci Code guy [Dan Brown] to come, he probably wouldn’t anyway and he’d overshadow the other authors.

*This year’s Men of Mystery is on Saturday, November 3, from 9am to 5pm at the Irvine Marriott Hotel. You can contact Joan at [jhansen36@juno.com](mailto:jhansen36@juno.com).*

## Other’s MOs:

### Seven Ways to Anger Your Agent

1 Give your contracts to your son/daughter/neighbor who’s a lawyer “just for a quick glance.”

Publishing, like every other industry, has it’s own vocabulary and mores. Unless a lawyer is versed in publishing law, this “quick once over” isn’t going to do much but cost you money. Case in point: a lawyer who charged for the advice that a clause be put in the contract that said “the author’s name will go on the book.”

2. Discuss the business side of things with anyone else involved before talking about it with your agent.

Case in point: I had an author write to a publisher canceling her book deal. She didn’t write to me. She didn’t know I’d already cashed the advance check and mailed her the contract and the advance. She got impatient. She made us both look like idiots.

3. Delegate your business discussions to your spouse or some other trusted person.

This just doesn’t work, ever. You’re the client. I talk with you. I’ll talk to both of you together, I’ll copy him/her on emails; you can decide everything the way you want, but you, the author, must always take part in the discussion.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Sleuthiness: Help From the Brainiacs

Is the right word on the edge of your brain but it just keeps escaping? Need a quote or wonder who said what? Need a zip code, an area code or a foreign phrase? Help is at hand at <http://www.Brainydictionary.com>.

On the site you’ll find links to [Brainyquote.com](http://Brainyquote.com) to search by subject or author; [Brainyencyclopedia.com](http://Brainyencyclopedia.com) to look up dozens of topics; [Brainyatlas.com](http://Brainyatlas.com) for airport codes, maps and flags from around the world;

[Brainyhistory.com](http://Brainyhistory.com) to find important dates and events; as well as sites to translate those words your foreign characters need to use and a zip code locator.

*Patti Shinnors*

## Transom Notes

**January:** **Pamela Samuels-Young's** new legal thriller, *In Firm Pursuit*, (a Romantic Times magazine "Top Pick") goes on sale January 1. Pamela's debut novel, *Every Reasonable Doubt*, was honored by USA Book News as a "Best Books of 2006" finalist in the mystery, suspense, thriller category. [pamelasamuels-young.com](http://pamelasamuels-young.com). **Sheila Lowe**, who has recently upgraded to active MWA membership, has the second edition of her book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Handwriting Analysis* (Alpha) set for release January 2. [sheilalowe.com](http://sheilalowe.com). **Andrew Neiderman's** thriller, *Finding Satan*, has found a home with producer Henri Zimand of Zimand Entertainment for feature film development. A second title, *The Baby Squad*, is being picked up by Robert Greenwald Productions, and Neiderman's horror-thriller, *The Need*, is being produced by Richard Finney. [neiderman.com](http://neiderman.com). **Robert Levinson** is one of 14 authors scheduled to appear at the Cerritos Library January 27 for the third annual "Murder on the Menu." [robertslevinson.com](http://robertslevinson.com). MWA members and friends are invited to **Sue Ann Jaffarian's** launch party January 27 for *The Curse of the Holy Pail*, second in her Odelia Grey series, at the Mystery Bookstore in Westwood. [sueannjaffarian.com](http://sueannjaffarian.com). **Theresa Schwegel**, whose new book, *Probable Cause*, (St. Martin's Minotaur) was released in December, will appear with Megan Abbott at Mysteries to Die For on Jan 27 at 10:30 a.m. and at the Mystery Bookstore the same day at 2:30 p.m. along with Megan and Charlie Huston. [theresaschwegel.com](http://theresaschwegel.com). **Thomas B. Sawyer** is slated to appear on a panel for IWOSC (Independent Writers of Southern California) January 29 at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Culver City. The topic is writing for the mystery, thriller, and crime markets: "Unraveling the Mystery Writing Market." [thomasbsawyer.com](http://thomasbsawyer.com).

**Other News:** A boatload of Get Well wishes to **Barbara Seranella** on her continuing health problems. Unfortunately Barbara was unable to attend the OC Sisters in Crime holiday luncheon at which she was to be presented by MWA SoCal with the first Lynds Award for Social Consciousness in Crime Fiction. Sisters in Crime has a new chapter in Hawaii and they're looking for authors who would like to speak if they happen to be visiting the islands. Contact Debby Atkinson at [atkinsond001@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:atkinsond001@hawaii.rr.com) or (808) 227-0170. Tours of the L.A. Sheriff's Dept. crime lab will be held on the first Friday of each month. For reservations contact **Gay Kinman** at [gkinman@juno.com](mailto:gkinman@juno.com). Apologies to **Cindy Pierre-Morton** for crediting her in the last issue of TMOG with an article in *Playboy*, when it actually appeared in *PlayGIRL*. *Sugar and Spice*, an anthology in which **Joanne Fluke** had a story, recently made the NYT list at #11 and *Publishers Weekly* at number 15. [murdershebaked.com](http://murdershebaked.com). Police have yet to identify the driver who injured **Bill Fitzhugh** in a hit-and-run accident. Meanwhile, he's parted ways (amicably) with Jimmy Vines, his agent of ten years, and signed with Lisa Vance at The Aaron Priest agency who has got him a deal for a book to be published in late 2007 or early 2008 by one of the Warner Books imprints. [billfitzhugh.com](http://billfitzhugh.com). **Gay Kinman** topped off last year with two new books: *Death in a Small Town* and *Wolf Castle* (YA novel, Hilliard and Harris.) [gaykinman.com](http://gaykinman.com). **Bob Levinson** was December's "featured writer of the month" on the WGA members-only WriterAction bulletin board, and Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine published one of his short stories. [robertslevinson.com](http://robertslevinson.com). **Paul Marks'** short story, *51-50*, appears in the "Psycho Noir" anthology at [hardluckstories.com](http://hardluckstories.com), and *Sleepy Lagoon Nocture* is in *LAndmarked for Murder*. [pauldmarks.com](http://pauldmarks.com). **Ralph Pezzullo** has inked a deal with Crown/Random House to write a CIA thriller titled *The Walk-In*. His nonfiction book, *Plunging Into Haiti* (University Press of Mississippi), was named the winner of the 2006 Douglas Dillion Award from the American Academy of Diplomacy. [ralphpezzullo.com](http://ralphpezzullo.com). **Allen Woodman** has been elected Chair of the English Department at Northern Arizona University.

Compiled by Sheila Lowe

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(Angering Your Agent Continued)

4. Give talks at writers conferences on “how to get published.”

Most authors know their own stories, maybe they’ve heard a few others from friends. They aren’t reading through a huge submission stack; they aren’t calling editors. There’s a lot that they don’t know. There’s a place for their tales of how to get published: the bar. Teach craft; teach do it yourself publicity. Don’t teach “how to get published.”

5. Always say yes, or no to blurb requests.

Blurbs are favors. When people owe us, I get to collect on the favor for your next book. But, if your blurbs are in demand, be judicious. Don’t blurb indiscriminately, it devalues your currency. But, if you never blurb a book, you don’t give me much currency to trade.

6. Badmouth your publisher/agent/editor, and/or the industry in public.

“Public” is too often not taken to mean in the bar at Bouchercon or any other writers’ conference, but it should. Keep the complaints for your circle of friends and colleagues, even me, your agent. But keep it off your website, blog, out of your presentations, and interviews. This is a lose/lose situation. Everyone knows publishing is a bizarre industry but we all work in it, and you do too. Zip your quip.

7. Don’t ask questions to clarify things when you don’t understand something.

It’s easier to answer questions than it is to solve all the problems that inevitably occur when everything isn’t clear.

Janet Reid

JetReid Literary Agency

(President’s Rap Continued)

indefatigable Patricia Smiley.

I feel very good that the chapter is returning to full vigor after so many disappointments, and wish to express my special thanks to Leslie Klinger, Patricia Smiley, and Eric Stone, without whom it could never have happened.

Also, a reminder that MWA National is accepting submissions for an anthology, *The Prosecution Rests*, until March 17. If you have questions, call or email the National Office. Also, until May 7, The Wolfe Pack is accepting submissions for the First Annual Black Orchid Novella Award, which features a \$1000 prize and publication in *Alfred Hitchcock’s Mystery Magazine*. More details available at [nerowolfe.org](http://nerowolfe.org).

So get out there and chronicle crime as you never have before!

JLW

## The Crime Calendar

In January we will list as many events as we can find for the coming year. Plan ahead. The rest of the year we will list only the upcoming events that we can fit in the space on page six, next to the MWA SoCal chapter information.

**Left Coast Crime**—Feb. 1-4, Seattle, WA, [www.lcc2007.com](http://www.lcc2007.com)

**Love is Murder**—Feb. 2-4, Rosemont, IL, [www.loveismurder.net](http://www.loveismurder.net)

**Murder in the Magic City**—Feb. 10, Birmingham, AL, [www.southernsinc.com/](http://www.southernsinc.com/)

**High Desert Crimes Book Fair**—March 24, Sierra Vista, AZ, [www.clik.to/sistersincrime](http://www.clik.to/sistersincrime)

**Sleuthfest**—April 19-22, Miami Beach, FL [www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm](http://www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm)

**Edgars Symposium & Banquet**—Apr. 24-25, New York, NY, [www.mysterywriters.org](http://www.mysterywriters.org)

**L.A. Times Festival of Books**—Apr. 28-29, Los Angeles, CA, [www.latimes.com/extras/festivalofbooks/](http://www.latimes.com/extras/festivalofbooks/)

**Malice Domestic** - May 4-6, Arlington, VA, [www.malicedomestic.org](http://www.malicedomestic.org)

**Mayhem in the Midlands**—May 24-27, Omaha, NE, [www.omahapubliclibrary.org/mayhem/](http://www.omahapubliclibrary.org/mayhem/)

**Murder in the Grove**—June 8-9, Boise, ID, [www.partnersincrimeboise.com/murder.htm](http://www.partnersincrimeboise.com/murder.htm)

**Hardboiled Heroes & Cozy Cats**—June 15-16, Dallas, TX, [www.mwasw.org/conf.html](http://www.mwasw.org/conf.html)

**Bloody Words**—June 15-17, Victoria, British Columbia, [bloodywords.com](http://bloodywords.com)

**Book Passage Mystery Writers Conf.**—June 21-24, Corte Madera, CA [www.bookpassage.com](http://www.bookpassage.com)

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**JANUARY LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM**

**SO I SOLD MY FIRST BOOK, NOW WHAT?**

**Sunday, January 28 2007 / Taix Restaurant**

**1911 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles 90026 (parking on premises: \$2.50)**

**Reception from 11 am / Luncheon 11:45 am sharp / Program from 12:30 pm**

**Advance reservations by mail: \$20 (member or guest)**

**Payment at the door: \$25**

**Make Checks Payable to: MWA-SoCal**

**Remit to: MWA-SoCal / 12021 Wilshire Blvd. #506, Los Angeles, CA 90025**

**Member Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guest(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **or E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please specify entrée for each attendee:**

	<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>GUEST</b>
<b>Chilled Salmon Salad</b>		
<b>Chicken Diablo</b>		
<b>Penne Pasta Monagasque (vegetarian)</b>		

**All meals include choice of soup, salad, sourdough bread, coffee, tea, sherbet.**

**WHO'S TALKING?**

**At the January luncheon.**

**Moderator: Naomi Hirahara**, is a writer and editor of books on the Japanese American experience, including mysteries and nonfiction. Her first novel, *SUMMER OF THE BIG BACHI* (Bantam, Delta Trade Paperback), was on *Publishers Weekly's* list of best books of 2004, as well as the best mystery list of the *Chicago Tribune*. It was nominated for a Macavity for best first novel. [www.naomihirahara.com](http://www.naomihirahara.com)

**Panelists:**

**Lynette Brasfield** is the author of *NATURE LESSONS* (St. Martin's Press), a Booksense selection which *Booklist* described as "a gripping first novel...part mystery, part dark family comedy, and part harsh political realism" and *Publishers' Weekly* praised as "thought-provoking...complex and intriguing." She is currently working on her second novel. [www.lynettebrasfield.com](http://www.lynettebrasfield.com)

**Randall Hicks** is an adoption attorney, so being of little imagination, his protagonist, Toby Dillon, is an adoption attorney as

well—except Toby is younger and better looking. His debut novel *THE BABY GAME* (Wordslinger Press), won the 2006 Gumshoe Award for Best First Novel and was a finalist for the Anthony, Barry and Macavity. [www.randall-hicks.com](http://www.randall-hicks.com)

**Eric Stone's** first two books came out in 2005. *The Living Room of the Dead* – a detective thriller set in Asia, loosely based on a true story of the Russian trade in prostitutes to Asia. And *Wrong Side of the Wall* - a true crime / sports biography. Eric worked for many years as a journalist in the U.S. and Asia, covering everything from economics to crime; politics to sex. [www.ericstone.com](http://www.ericstone.com)



*The March of Crime* is the monthly newsletter of the Southern California Chapter/ Mystery Writers of America

Editor: Eric Stone  
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**Southern California Chapter**

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**Los Angeles, CA 90025**

*(The Crime Calendar continued)*

**Deadly Ink**—June 29-July 1, Parsippany, NJ,  
[www.deadlyink.com](http://www.deadlyink.com)

**Thrillerfest**—July 12-15, New York, NY,  
[www.thrillerfest.org](http://www.thrillerfest.org)

**West Hollywood Book Fair**—Sept., W. Hollywood, CA,  
[www.westhollywoodbookfair.org/](http://www.westhollywoodbookfair.org/)

**Killer Nashville**—Sept., Nashville, TN,  
[www.killernashville.com](http://www.killernashville.com)

**Bouchercon 38**—Sept. 27-30, Anchorage, Alaska,  
[www.bouchercon2007.com](http://www.bouchercon2007.com)

**Cape Fear Crime Festival**—Oct., Wilmington, NC,  
[www.capefearcrimefestival.org/](http://www.capefearcrimefestival.org/)

**Magna cum Murder**—Oct., Muncie, IN,  
[www.magnacummurder.com](http://www.magnacummurder.com)

**The Great Manhattan Mystery Conclave**—Oct., Manhattan, KS, [www.manhattanmysteries.com](http://www.manhattanmysteries.com)

**Men of Mystery**—Nov. 3, Irvine, CA, [jhansen36@juno.com](mailto:jhansen36@juno.com)

## **Mystery Writers of America Southern California Chapter**

12021 Wilshire Blvd., #506, Los Angeles, CA 90025

Email: [info@socalmwa.com](mailto:info@socalmwa.com)

The Web of Crime: [www.socalmwa.com](http://www.socalmwa.com)

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**Mystery Writers of America**

17 East 47th Street, 6th Fl / New York, NY 10017

Phone: 212.888.8171 / Fax: 212.888.8107

Email: [mwa@mysterywriters.org](mailto:mwa@mysterywriters.org)

Website: [www.mysterywriters.org](http://www.mysterywriters.org)

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