

MARCH OF CRIME

MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA—SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

2011 SLATE OF MWA BOARD MEMBERS



Gary Phillips, President Elect



Tyler Dilts



Gay Tolt Kinman



Paul Levine



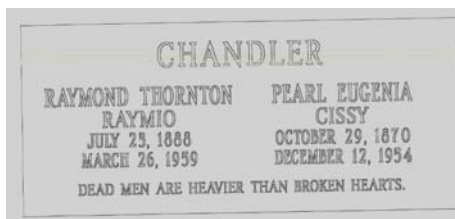
Jeri Westerson

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MWA-SoCal balloting has been concluded. The results: President: Gary Phillips. Board members: Richard Brewer (additional term), Tyler Dilts, Gay Tolt Kinman, Paul Levine, and Jeri Westerson (additional term). They will work together with the returning board members: Deborah Atkinson, James Scott Bell, Christa Faust, Darrell James, and Pamela Samuels Young. Congratulations to all!

Raymond Chandler and Wife to be Reunited Feb 14



A sample of what the new marker will look like at Mount Hope Cemetery in San Diego.

Like no Raymond Chandler story you ever read, the real life drama of his death unfolds on Valentine's Day February 14. Chandler's wife Cissy died in 1954. While older than Chandler by some eighteen years, she was nevertheless the love of his life. She was cremated and her ashes were kept across town. When Chandler died in 1959, he was interred without much fanfare at Mount Hope Cemetery in San Diego.

Enter Loren Latker.

Continued on Page 9 "Chandler"

The President's Rap Sheet

Gary Phillips



New President Message



Okay, let me make this short and sweet and not just because Jeri had to nudge me to get this message done. First off, a most happy new year to you and yours, and here's looking ahead to the mystery and wonderment the writing and reading game holds for all of us. I won't go into a litany about the various changes that have, and continue to occur in the book world as you're no doubt well aware of what's been happening. Let me note though those of us on the SoCal MWA board will do our best to put on talks, panels and other such gatherings that reflect these changes so as to have presentation that are informative and, hopefully, entertaining for the chapter.

The board will meet soon in a mini-retreat to map out the aforementioned as well as lining up our tasks at the upcoming *L.A. Times* Festival of Books (now across town at USC), the California Crime Writers Conference and so on. Please feel free to email me with any comments or suggestions you have so we can work together to make this chapter as strong and viable as it can be to its members.

Here's to outgoing president Naomi Hirahara and the great work she did and the fine example she set.

Feel free to reach me at: gary@gdphillips.com/.

Until next time.

Gary



Mystery Writers of America, Inc. (MWA) was established in 1945 by a dozen or so like-minded mystery writers for the purpose of promoting and protecting the interests and welfare of mystery writers and to increase the esteem and literary recognition given to the genre.

www.socalmwa.com

Member Benefits

- ❖ Monthly meetings at which members can network and enjoy the company of other writers.
- ❖ *The March of Crime*, a monthly newsletter full of publishing industry and market info, member updates, and chapter news. [E-mail us](#) to submit material or to get the fax number or postal address for doing so.
- ❖ An online mailing list through which any MWA member with Internet access can ask questions and trade information with others on a daily basis. Past messages are archived, and the service also includes a calendar, shared files, and a list of Internet bookmarks. [Click here to join the list.](#)
- ❖ A speaker's bureau, where members can volunteer to participate in speaking engagements and other opportunities to be in front of the public. It's run by Naomi Hirahara; [e-mail her](#) to submit your name.
- ❖ A [library of members' works](#), housed at California State University, Long Beach. Any member may donate submit or produced work in for inclusion.

A Farewell Message from Outgoing Prez, Naomi Hirahara



It's No Secret.

When I was still an aspiring novelist, I would see MWA's table with the funny Edgar Allan Poe logo at mystery book conventions and wonder if it was some kind of secret society.

Little would I know that I would serve as chapter president of the SoCal MWA chapter several years later.

I'm happy to report that MWA is not a secret society, but it is an organization with a very strong infrastructure. In fact, each chapter president and national board member receives a very large three-ring binder filled by bylaws and rules at our orientation in New York City every January.

In addition to serving as the leader of his or her respective chapter, the chapter president also must serve on a couple of national committees. I was the chair of MWA:Reads, which initiated the Mississippi book drive, as well as a member of the Education Committee. The national board has a monthly teleconference meeting on the first Wednesday of every month, and I'm amazed that most everyone dutifully calls in, despite work and other responsibilities. And yes, Robert's Rules of Order applies; we even have a parliamentarian who makes sure that we are on track.

After a year of service, I have renewed respect for MWA. While many of us joined MWA out of pointed self-interest, I see that this 65-year-old organization plays an important role in protecting the general interests of mystery writers and the mystery genre – case in point, its recent stand on Dorchester Publishing and its less than satisfactory treatment of some of its authors. MWA added some specific member benefits this past year, including discounts with www.booktour.com. For a list of benefits, see <http://www.mysterywriters.org/?q=Register-Benefits>. And there are also MWA's short story anthologies; submissions are open from all members of good standing. The next one will be edited by the incomparable Lee Child. The deadline for the Dark Justice anthology is March 15, 2011, and I hope many SoCal MWA members will be sending in a submission.

I wish that I could have served the chapter longer, but personal issues—family illness—have made me reevaluate my schedule and pare down my commitments. Incoming president Gary Phillips will bring new vigor and energy in the chapter and I hope you all will help him. I know that I will.

Happy New Year, all! It was an honor to represent the SoCal MWA chapter in 2010.

Sincerely,

Naomi Hirahara

Killer Quotes

“Success to Crime.” The toast offered by Sam Spade after pouring drinks in his apartment for his less-than-welcome middle-of-the-night visitors, SFPD Detective Lt. Dundee and Sgt. Polhaus.
 -- Dashiell Hammett, *THE MALTESE FALCON*

The Crime Calendar

February 4-6, 2011: Love is Murder, Chicago IL www.loveismurder.net

February 5, 2011: Murder in the Magic City—Birmingham, AL
<http://www.murderinthemagiccity.com/>

February 18-20, 2011: San Francisco Writers Conference, San Francisco CA
www.sfwriters.org

March 3-6, 2011: SleuthFest, Deerfield Beach FL www.sleuthfest.com

March 12-13, 2011: Tucson Festival of Books, Tucson AZ
www.tucsonfestivalofbooks.org

March 24-27, 2011: Left Coast Crime, Santa Fe NM www.leftcoastcrime.org/2011

April 9, 2011: Literary Orange, Irvine, CA <http://literaryorange.org>

April 29-May 1, 2011: Malice Domestic, Bethesda MD www.malicedomestic.org

May 19-22, 2011: Crimefest, Bristol, UK www.crimefest.com

May 26-28, 2011: Mayhem in the Midlands, Omaha NE

June 3-5, 2011: Bloody Words, Victoria BC www.bloodywords2011.com

June 3-5, 2011: Mayhem in the Grove (formerly Murder in the Grove), Idaho,
www.murderinthegrove.com

June 11-12, 2011: California Crime Writers Conference, Pasadena CA, sponsored
by SinC/LA and SoCal MWA www.ccwconference.org

July 6-9, 2011: Thrillerfest, New York, NY www.thrillerwriters.org

July 14-17, 2011: Public Safety Writers Association, Las Vegas NV
<http://www.policewriter.com>

September 15-18, 2011: Bouchercon: Spirit of St. Louis, St. Louis MO
www.bouchercon2011.com



YOUR EDITOR SPEAKS JERI WESTERSON



What's in store for 2011? I recently asked my agent about what to expect for a new two book proposal we sent on to my editor. Six months ago the prospects weren't great,

but with the third book doing better than the second, a new contract might be forthcoming. But he readily admitted that all bets are off and that things seem to change daily. He's been in the business well over twenty years and he can't tell me anything with certainty. And I can tell that my editor is scratching his head a little, too. (The good news is that a two book deal *did* come through. Sighs of relief all around.)

What is a certainty is that authors will continue to write in whatever format seems to work for them at the moment. Print, e-book, small

press, large press, no press...all bets are off.

One thing remains the same. Authors are still looking to make a living at this crazy game. Are the prospects of that slipping away like so much dust? The opportunities wax and wane. We've got to be clever and quick and pay attention. Man, I'm getting too old for this! And I've only just started. The SoCalMWA board strives to keep up with the ever-changing face of publishing by offering interesting speakers and events throughout the year. Keep on the lookout for those events. The next one is below. As always, if you have anything to say, I'm listening. themarchofcrime@gmail.com.

Save the Date

Saturday, February 19, 2011

11 am to 1:30 pm

**"Everything You Always Wanted to Know
About Audio Books But Where Afraid to Ask"**

Tom Bergin's Tavern 840 S. Fairfax Ave, LA

(323) 936-7151

RSVP and pay at <http://www.socalmwa.com>

MWA : Sara Paretsky As Grand Master & Raven Awards

November 18, 2010 - New York, NY – Sara Paretsky has been named the 2011 Grand Master by Mystery Writers of America (MWA). MWA's Grand Master Award represents the pinnacle of achievement in mystery writing and was established to acknowledge important contributions to this genre, as well as a body of work that is both significant and of consistent high quality. Ms. Paretsky will be presented with her award at The Edgar Awards Banquet, which will be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City on Thursday, April 28, 2011. When told of being named Grand Master, Paretsky said, "I'm so glad to win this. I'm glad to have this for my very own."

Paretsky revolutionized the mystery world in 1982 with her novel *Indemnity*. The book introduced detective V.I. Warshawski, a female private investigator who used her wits and fists, challenging a genre in which women typically played minor or passive roles. Paretsky, who lives in Chicago, has written twelve best-selling Warshawski novels. She has also penned a memoir, two stand-alone novels, a collection of short stories, and has edited four anthologies. In 1986 Paretsky founded Sisters in Crime, an organization that supports women crime writers, earning her *MS Magazine's* 1987 Woman of the Year Award. The British Crime Writers awarded Paretsky both the Cartier Diamond Dagger for lifetime achievement and the Gold Dagger for best novel of 2004. Her books are currently published in thirty countries.

"The mystery genre took a seven-league stride thanks to Sara Paretsky, whose gutsy and dauntless protagonist showed that women can be tough guys, too," said Larry Light, Executive Vice President of Mystery Writers of America. "Before, in Sara's words, women in mysteries were either vamps or victims. Her heroine, private eye V.I. Warshawski, is whip-smart and two-fisted, capable of slugging back whiskey and wrecking cars, and afire to redress social injustice."

Continued on Page 9 "Edgars"

LATFOB To Be at USC This Spring

The Los Angeles Times Festival of Books has called the campus of UCLA home for the last fifteen years, but that is about to change. USC is now to play host to the largest book festival in the nation.

The change occurred when The Times coordinators and UCLA could not agree on shared expenses and logistics. The USC change of venue would seem to offer a more centralized location, more access to public transportation to festival goers, and better parking facilities.

The festival is scheduled for April 30 and May 1 and will still feature booths, panels, book signings, and areas and entertainment for children. SoCalMWA will have a booth at the event and MWA will continue to sponsor the mystery track of panels.

Write Mind: Going the Distance

By Dennis Paumbo

In the early 60's, there was a hot art-house movie called *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. I think of this film sometimes when trying to help my writer patients working on long-form projects—novels, plays, screenplays, etc. The running analogy is a good one, because long-form writing is like running a marathon: it requires endurance, patience, a deep reserve of will power and commitment, and an almost Herculean ability to delay gratification.

(To continue the analogy, other kinds of writing might be likened to sprints—short stories, sitcoms, poems, etc. Sprints require a burst of speed and power, the knock-out punch of a single idea or concept, and a quick build to an explosive finish.)

Where the long-form writer gets in trouble is in believing that he or she can maintain over the length of the project the same vigor and intensity that's brought to a shorter piece. Hence, when the work slows, or gets bogged down in exposition, or drifts off on tangents, the writer panics. His or her confidence flags. Enthusiasm drains away. The unfinished novel or screenplay is, metaphorically speaking, "put away in a drawer," often never to be

brought out again.

To avoid this, here are some suggestions to help you "keep on keeping on" during those long, painful stretches that plague anyone writing a big project:

**Pace yourself.* As I said, it's a marathon, not a sprint. 16-hour days at the keyboard, living on pizza and Red Bull, may get you through a short piece or re-write that's on deadline, but for a novel or screenplay it's deadly. Hard on your family, your vital organs, and your outlook on life.

**Expect slow spots, things that don't work, and reverses.* Long-form story-telling has its own rhythm, in the reading as well as the writing. The reader needs to take a breath, be reminded of plot points, given a break from unending action and/or revelation. So do you, the writer. Like any extended trip, the journey through a novel or screenplay involves wrong turns, pleasant surprises off the beaten path, some down time to remind yourself why you're even *taking* this route—even return visits to places and events to see what further gold can be mined from them. Just keep reminding yourself that you're in this for the long haul, that there'll be good days and bad, pitfalls and peaks of inspiration, and then get on with it.

"Courage" continues on Page 8

Chapter News

Hannah Dennison's fourth Vicky Hill mystery, titled *THIEVES!* will be in bookstores on Jan 4. A launch party will be held at the Mystery Book Store, 1036 Broxton, Westwood on Saturday January 8 at 4.30 pm. There will be the usual British trivia quiz and a few fabulous prizes.

Tom Sawyer will be speaking/paneling on the topic of 9/11 Truth, along with David Ray Griffin, Michelle Phillips, Joseph Culp and Roseanne Barr or Ed Asner at the Conscious Life Expo, LAX Hilton, Feb. 12th, from 8 - 9:30 pm.

John Morgan Wilson's sixth short story for *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, "One-Hit Wonder," appears in the January issue. Also in January, John celebrates the second year of Book Buzz, his online column of LGBT writing and publishing news that appears on the Lambda Literary Foundation website. Here's the link:

<http://www.lambdaliterary.org/features/news/12/02/book-buzz-24/#more-3140>. He also has a short story in the forthcoming anthology *Art for Art* from Modernist Press.

Linda Palmer, using the pen name **Melinda Wells**, writes a series of murder mysteries set against the background of a cable TV cooking show. Her 8th mystery, titled *PIE A LA MURDER*, will be published July 5, 2011 by Berkley Prime Crime. Her 9th, as yet untitled, will be published in early 2012. As Linda Palmer, she teaches novel-writing in the prestigious UCLA Extension Writers' Program and was named 2010 Outstanding Instructor in Creative Writing. Palmer is the program's only two-time winner.

Gayle Bartos-Pool and Alice Zogg will be featured authors at the new La Crescenta Library on January 15, 2011, at 2 p.m. The library is at 2809 Foothill Blvd. in La Crescenta, CA. The local authors will discuss their latest novels.

Lisa Morton's debut novel *THE CASTLE OF LOS ANGELES* (published by Gray Friar Press) has just been nominated for the Black Quill Award.

The mass market edition of **Paul Levine's** *ILLEGAL*, a tale of human trafficking on the California-Mexican border, will be published by Bantam on January 25.

Library Journal has named **Gayle Lynds'** *THE BOOK OF SPIES* one of the Top Five Thrillers and also named the audio version one of the top audio readings, of the year. *Suspense Magazine* has listed it as one of the Best Books of the Year.

The upcoming release of **Deborah Coonts'** *LUCKY STIFF*, the second in the Lucky O'Toole Vegas Adventure Series, will be released Feb 15. Also, *WANNA GET LUCKY?*, the first in the series, just made New York Times columnist, Marilyn Stasio's list of "notable crime fiction for 2010".

BUTTERCREAM BUMP OFF -- **Jenn McKinlay's** second title in the national bestselling Cupcake Bakery Mystery series is out on Jan 4.

BEYOND THE MAST by **Rich Jackson**, a new mystery, is now available.

Lee Goldberg's eleventh original Monk novel, *MR. MONK ON THE ROAD*, comes out in hardcover in January from Penguin/Putnam and he's got three more on the way, so there will be new entries in the popular series through 2012.

Jeri Westerson's third Crispin Guest novel, *THE DEMON'S PARCHMENT*, will be released in large format this fall. French foreign rights were sold to her first two books in the series, *VEIL OF LIES* and *SERPENT IN THE THORNS*. She's also in negotiations with St. Martin's for Crispin books 5 and 6. Writing as **Haley Walsh**, she is also in negotiation with MLR Press for the second Skyler Foxe book, *FOXES HUNT*. Jeri will be on two panels at ALA in San Diego on Jan 8, and on a panel with Gary Phillips, Brett Battles, Robert Fate, and John Lescroart at *Murder on the Menu* in Cerritos on Jan 29. She'll be in *Murder in the Magic City* in Alabama Feb 5 and at the Oakland Library with Cara Black and Kelli Stanley on Feb 26.

Amnon Kabatchnik announces the upcoming April 2011 release of *Blood on the Stage: 1950-1975*. This is the third volume in his series which cites milestone plays of crime, mystery and detection. Kabatchnik's prior volume in the series was nominated last year for an Agatha Award in non-fiction.

Sue Ann Jaffarian's second book in her Ghost of Granny Apples series, *THE GHOST IN THE POLKA DOT BIKINI*, will be released February 1, 2011.

Robert S. Levinson interviewed on camera for "Operation Infrastructure," a six-part History Channel series scheduled to begin airing in March. Bob's four Neil Gulliver & Stevie Marriner "Affair" novels (*THE ELVIS AND MARILYN AFFAIR*, *THE JAMES DEAN AFFAIR*, *THE JOHN LENNON AFFAIR*, *THE ANDY WARHOL AFFAIR*) in December joined his other Amazon Kindle titles and are now being prepped for more e-book outlets. He's among contributors to the *NOW WRITE! MYSTERIES AND THRILLERS* instructional anthology, set for January 2012 publication.

LUCKY STIFF, the second in the Lucky O'Toole Vegas Adventure series by **Deborah Coonts** will be released by Forge Books on February 15th. Deborah will be signing books at The Mysterious Galaxy in San Diego at 4pm on Saturday, February 19th. More local signings to follow.



“Write Mind” continued

**Take side-trips.* Stop occasionally to write a short piece—an article or essay, a letter to the local Op-Ed section, a blog, etc. This gives your long-form muscles some much-needed R & R, and helps flex those short-form ones. Just because you’re running a marathon doesn’t mean you want to forget how to sprint.

**Don’t rush the ending (just to get the damned thing finished).* A hard temptation to resist, but you’ve got to try. There’s no sense laboring over a piece for months, or even years, getting the narrative, characters and tone just right, only to rush the thing to its climax because you’re so relieved to finally see the end approaching. Let the reader—and you, too—enjoy the fruits of your labor; give yourself the luxury of bringing the same effort and care to making the most out of the conclusion. Do justice to your characters, your story—and to yourself.

**Finally, when the project is done, expect some post-partum blues.* You’ve lived in the world of your novel, play or screenplay so long, it’s familiar, the known. Despite its myriad problems and headaches, it’s what you’ve called home for a long time. Believe me, after bitching about it the whole time you’ve been writing it, when it’s finally finished...you’ll miss it.

Which is why, as hard as it is to write a long-form piece, as vehemently as you swear that you’ll never do it again, pretty soon you’ll start thinking about a new one.

It’s like the end of a long, painful relationship. You swear to anyone who’ll listen that you’ll never fall in love again. You don’t want the grief, the false hopes, all the drama. Then, one day, you see someone in a bookstore, or at a party, and you say, “Hmmm...”

It’s kinda like that.

Formerly a Hollywood screenwriter (My Favorite Year; Welcome Back, Kotter, etc.), Dennis Palumbo is now a licensed psychotherapist in private practice. His mystery fiction has appeared in Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine, The Strand, Written By and elsewhere, and is collected in From Crime to Crime (Tallfellow Press). His new novel, Mirror Image (Poisoned Pen Press), is the first in a series featuring psychologist Daniel Rinaldi, a trauma expert who consults with the Pittsburgh Police. Info at www.dennispalumbo.com.

Men of Mystery

More than 400 mystery fans joined 50 authors at Joan Hansen’s 11th Annual “Men of Mystery” fete Oct. 30 at the Irvine Marriott Hotel, this year featuring presentations by Don Winslow, Gregg Hurwitz and Christopher Rice. Familiar faces in the crowd:



From left: Past Chapter Presidents Robert S. Levinson and Leslie Klinger with Stephen Jay Schwartz



From left: William Link, Bob Levinson, Dick Lochte



Bob Levinson and hostess Joan Hansen.

"Edgars" Continued from Page 5

Two exceptional mystery bookstores will be honored with the 2011 Raven Award. Established in 1953, the award recognizes outstanding achievement in the mystery field outside the realm of creative writing. Once Upon a Crime, in Minneapolis, MN, and Centuries & Sleuths in Chicago, IL, will receive recognition for their contribution to the mystery community. They also will receive their awards at the Edgar Award Banquet in New York City on Thursday, April 28, 2011.

Centuries & Sleuths Bookstore was named one of the Ten Best Bookstores in Chicago by the Chicago Tribune. Many customers have tagged the owner, Augie Alesky, as the coolest bookseller in Chicago. "I have always wanted a Raven. The mystery community is such a great place," Alesky said upon hearing the news.

The store has hosted hundreds of author readings and talks, with both new and established writers. Augie's programs are innovative, including mock trials, debates, and numerous "Meeting of Minds" programs similar to the PBS series. In fact, from the very first days of opening, actors and then authors themselves were encouraged to dress in period costumes to illustrate and dramatize a book. Centuries & Sleuths was nominated for the American Booksellers Association "Bookseller of the Year" award in 2008. The store marks its 20th Anniversary this year.

Once Upon a Crime Mystery Bookstore owners Pat Frovarp and Gary Schulze read, review, promote, and hand-sell mysteries, from small presses and new authors to the biggest best-sellers. Pat was thrilled to hear about the Raven Award, "What a wonderful, wonderful honor!" she said.

Their store is open late to host signings for local and traveling authors, and they host an annual Write of Spring. Every March dozens of Minnesota mystery authors are able to meet hundreds of fans and celebrate the world of mysteries. They are currently taking submissions for a Write of Spring anthology. Pat and Gary are such mystery book enthusiasts that they married at their store on August 1, 2007, five years to the day that they had bought the store from the previous owners. In their wedding photos, Pat held a bouquet of flowers, and Gary held a Maltese Falcon statue. Once Upon a

Crime will celebrate 25 years in business in Spring 2012.

The Edgar Awards, or "Edgars," as they are commonly known, are named after MWA's patron saint Edgar Allan Poe and are presented to authors of distinguished work in various categories. www.mysterywriters.org

"Chandler" from Page 1

In April 2009, while doing additional research for his web site Shamus Town, Loren Latker re-read in Frank MacShane's Chandler biography "The Life of Raymond Chandler" (1976), wherein he identified Chandler as one of the originators of the hard-boiled detective story and compared him to Joyce, Tolstoy, Chaucer, Twain and Conrad, on page 268 that "... somehow no one thought to have Chandler buried with his wife's remains or to have him cremated as he wished."

Both Raymond and his wife Pearl (Cissy) wished to be together after they died, as they had been together for the last 22 years of their lives. However, when Pearl Cecily Eugenia died in 1954, she was cremated and placed in permanent storage at Cypress View because, as Latker said, Ray was too bereaved and drunk to make final arrangements. For 56 years Cissy Chandler's remains have been in a basic box urn in a metal storage vault behind the no longer used antique cremation ovens in the basement of a 100-year-old closed-to-the-public mausoleum with other unclaimed urns.

The storage vault's location borders Mount Hope Cemetery, where Raymond Chandler was buried two tenths of a mile away in 1959, at public expense, because he left an estate of \$60,000 and no burial instructions. In the past 50 years both Cissy and Ray have been neglected and almost forgotten, especially by Ray's heir, his publishers and copyright holders who have made a fortune from his work. Only his fans remember and make his grave one of the most visited in Mount Hope Cemetery.

Latker discussed this with his wife, Dr. Annie Thiel, and then sent an email to a small group of Chandler and Shamus Town fans, suggesting that they finally grant the Chandler's final wish and reunite them for eternity.

Against all odds, their petition was granted. Nearly two years later they have a court order allowing them to reunite Cissy and Ray, which they have scheduled for Valentines Day, February 14, 2011.

In preparation for the court hearing it was necessary to get Ray's will to see if there were any final wishes. Latker knew that Jean Fracasse, Chandler's secretary, contested his hand written Codicil, and sued Helga Green in 1960. Annie put Latker in touch with her dear friend Patrick DeCarolis Esq., and with the help of Trope &

"Chandler" continued

DeCarolis LLP, the case records were obtained. Though they contained both Ray's will and his handwritten codicil, neither made any reference to his final wishes.

Annie's close friend, Aissa Wayne Esq. (the daughter of John Wayne), working off Latker's draft, wrote and presented their petition in court. The court date was September 8, 2010 at 2:30 PM, in Department C-25 located at the Central Court House at 220 West Broadway in San Diego. After a 30-minute hearing and a phone call to Cypress View's manager Mike Koester, Judge Richard S. Whitney granted their petition, saying no one, not even Pearl Chandler, should end up in a storeroom with the lawnmowers and pesticide. The story made the local CBS TV News (KFMB Channel 8) and the San Diego Union-Tribune. Later, 209 news sites worldwide carried an Associated Press story.

To date all required fees have been paid, a new headstone has been ordered and arrangements are being finalized for the Valentines Day 2011 graveside service and a reception after. Though the official start time has not been set, it will likely be early afternoon around 1 :00 PM.

Current plans are for a Dixieland Jazz band to lead a procession carrying Cissy's urn through Mount Hope to Ray's gravesite. A minister from St. James By The Sea will conduct the service, as was originally done for both Cissy and Ray. Latker said that attendees may not toast them at graveside with Gin Gimlets as they previously wished due to alcohol restrictions at the cemetery, but a later reception is planned.

Both Patrick DeCarolis Esq., and Aissa Wayne Esq., provided all the legal work Pro Bono. Without them, said Latker, none of this would have come to pass. Latker extended thanks to the many fans who signed the petition given to the judge, and to Judge Whitney who had the judicial chops to go against the long precedent of never moving remains.

"Sit down, pal. Breathe quietly, keep your voice down, and remember that a Carne operative is to a cheap shamus like you, what Toscanini is to an organ grinder's monkey." *Mr. Peters of the Carne Organization to Ray Chandler's seminal detective Phillip Marlowe. From the "Long Good-by" by Raymond Chandler*

Academy Award winning director Billy Wilder said of Raymond Chandler: *"... a kind of lightning struck on every page. How often do you read a description of a character who says that he had hair growing out of his ear long enough to catch a moth? Not many people write like that; and the dialogue was good, and the dialogue was sharp."*

"... Also ... there are very few people who can get the flavor of California. It's very peculiar, you know, that the only person who caught the Californian atmosphere in prose was an Englishman – Chandler. And the only person who caught it on canvas was also an Englishman by the name of Hockney. No one else can paint California: he can." Ivan Moffat, *'On The Fourth Floor of Paramount: Interview With Billy Wilder', in The World of Raymond Chandler, ed. Miriam Gross (London, 1977), pp. 43-51*

WHO IS THAT GUY? KEN BRUEN

By Dan Kelly

Here's the difference between Ken Bruen and most other crime novelists. It's not all that unusual for a fictional detective to agree to an evening rendezvous that ends up with him or her in the hospital. But only in Bruen's world would the shamus think he was heading out on his first date in forever, nervously dress for the occasion in his favorite thrift-shop clothes, then get beaten to a pulp by a current member of the police force he used to work for. (And then have that same woman ask him to forgive and forget.)

This startling sequence comes from THE GUARDS, the first book in Bruen's best-known series, the one featuring Irish private eye Jack Taylor. (The title is the English-language name of the *Gardai*, the Irish national police force.)

THE GUARDS begins with Jack at loose ends over his recent expulsion from the force for heavy drinking and reckless behavior. But he soon develops a reputation for 'finding things' in his (and Bruen's) native Galway. Readers may hear the detective's life calling when a woman asks Jack to look into her daughter's apparent suicide. But the whole P.I. thing is a bit dicey in Ireland, where everyone detests an In-former.

Like most of Jack's cases, this one will lead him to the underbelly of the Celtic Tiger, as the late great Irish economic boom was known. Driven by memories of a kinder and gentler Galway, Jack genuinely wants to try and set things straight for his clients, a resolve that will lead him down too many dark alleys and into too many hospital rooms.

He must also endure a debilitating lack of respect, most often from his own mother, and from a one-time friend in the Guards who turns into a bitter enemy as he rises to the top ranks of the department. Yet Jack somehow manages to find kindness and even love along the way, usually just enough to keep him going.

Like most of Bruen's heroes, Jack is a big reader who shares his enthusiasms along the way. (Ed McBain rules.)

Jack doesn't always solve his cases *per se*, but the books all reach satisfying conclusions. The others in this series are: THE KILLING OF THE TINKERS, THE MAGDALEN MARTYRS, THE DRAMATIST, PRIEST, CROSS, SANCTUARY, and THE DEVIL. Reading them in order is the best way to savor their fascinating support cast, ongoing subplots, and local Galway lore.

Continued Page 11 "Ken Bruen"

"Ken Bruen" Continued

Here's the difference between Ken Bruen and most other crime novelists. It's not all that unusual for a fictional detective to agree to an evening rendezvous that ends up with him or her in the hospital. But only in Bruen's world would the shamus think he was heading out on his first date in forever, nervously dress for the occasion in his favorite thrift-shop clothes, then get beaten to a pulp by a current member of the police force he used to work for. (And then have that same woman ask him to forgive and forget.)

This startling sequence comes from *THE GUARDS*, the first book in Bruen's best-known series, the one featuring Irish private eye Jack Taylor. (The title is the English-language name of the *Gardaí*, the Irish national police force.)

THE GUARDS begins with Jack at loose ends over his recent expulsion from the force for heavy drinking and reckless behavior. But he soon develops a reputation for 'finding things' in his (and Bruen's) native Galway. Readers may hear the detective's life calling when a woman asks Jack to look into her daughter's apparent suicide. But the whole P.I. thing is a bit dicey in Ireland, where everyone detests an Informer.

Like most of Jack's cases, this one will lead him to the underbelly of the Celtic Tiger, as the late great Irish economic boom was known. Driven by memories of a kinder and gentler Galway, Jack genuinely wants to try and set things straight for his clients, a resolve that will lead him down too many dark alleys and into too many hospital rooms.

He must also endure a debilitating lack of respect, most often from his own mother, and from a one-time friend in the Guards who turns into a bitter enemy as he rises to the top ranks of the department. Yet Jack somehow manages to find kindness and even love along the way, usually just enough to keep him going.

Like most of Bruen's heroes, Jack is a big reader who shares his enthusiasms along the way. (Ed McBain rules.)

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Bruen's other main series recounts the adventures of London police sergeant Tom Brant, a man who might best be described as a corrupt Dirty Harry. This setup could have turned into kind of a bitter brew if Brant weren't so good at solving crimes (at least the ones that get under his skin), and if the books didn't occasionally dole out some shockingly coal-black humor.

Brant is surrounded by crazies on all sides. His colleagues are so absorbed by personal and career problems that it sometimes comes as a shock when they actually catch anybody. The first title in this series, *A White Arrest*, refers to their version of the Holy Grail, a collar so spectacular that it can wipe out all of their many past sins.

Fortunately, there are plenty of maniacs running around loose in Brant's London, like the Umpire, a man so upset by the national cricket team that he starts knocking off its members. Brant & Company might have found him faster if they weren't also chasing a group of drug-addled vigilantes, who have begun hanging various neighborhood scum from the nearest streetlamps.

The reader is forced to conclude that London is better off with Brant than without, despite the fact that he collects freebies and favors absolutely anywhere he can. He even appropriates a colleague's draft memoirs when the book world (and a lady agent) briefly catch his eye.

This series continues with two more skinny paperbacks, *TAMING THE ALIEN* and *THE MCDEAD*; all three are collected in *THE WHITE TRILOGY*. The series then moves up to trade-paper status with *BLITZ*, *VIXEN*, *CALIBRE*, and *AMMUNITION*.

Bruen has also written five books set in New York. *BUST*, *SLIDE*, and *THE MAX* comprise a three-volume series co-written by Jason Starr. *TOWER* is a stand-alone co-written with Reed Farrel Coleman. And *ONCE WERE COPS* is a stand-alone he wrote alone.

LONDON BOULEVARD, yet another stand-alone, re-imagines the Billy Wilder classic *Sunset Boulevard*, and *AMERICAN SKIN* is a stand-alone set mainly in the American Southwest.

Bruen is now getting the Hollywood treatment as well. *The Guards* debuted to strong reviews on Irish TV last summer (2010), with more episodes planned. William Monahan (who wrote *The Departed*) has written and directed a film version of *London Boulevard* with Colin Farrell and Keira Knightley in the lead roles; it awaits a U.S. release after opening last year (2010) in the U.K. And *Blitz* is currently being prepped for a 2011 release with action star Jason Statham playing Brant.

Ken Bruen is probably not for everyone. But in a book world full of incredible heroes chasing down unbelievable villains, he keeps it simple, and riveting.

He is definitely worth checking out.

SoCal MWA Sending Books to Dixie Regional Library System in Mississippi



Just some of the books chapter members donated.

The SoCal MWA chapter, participating in MWA:Reads rural Mississippi book drive project, has already sent more than 100 books to the Dixie Regional Library System headquartered in Pontotoc, Mississippi.

The library director, Judy McNeece, expressed her appreciation, as their budget for its eight libraries has been cut drastically over this past year. The libraries include Pontotoc County Library, Sherman Public Library, Jesse Yancy Memorial Library (Bruce), Calhoun City Library, Edmondson Memorial Library (Vardaman), Okolona Carnegie Library, Houston Carnegie Library, and Houlika Public Library.

This effort is part of MWA's continuing partnership with the nonprofit, Reader to Reader, to collect books for impoverished areas whose libraries have limited resources to acquire new materials.

Last year MWA donated more than 2,000 books to the Navajo Nation. Starting this year and continuing through 2011, MWA has made a commitment to aid rural Mississippi libraries.

"We are so pleased to partner again this year with the Mystery Writers of America," says David Mazor, executive director of Reader to Reader, Inc. "The generosity of MWA members [in 2009] helped make our Navajo Nation Book Drive a big success."

The Mississippi Rural Community Library Book Drive is seeking to boost the resources of community libraries in Mississippi's rural towns. The residents of these towns do not have easy access to book stores so the local community library plays a vital role as their primary access to books. The rural community libraries have been hit particularly hard by the economic downturn at a time when residents have placed increased demand on library resources.

"The book drive will be incredible, really a godsend," says Beth Edwards, librarian at the Winston County Library in Louisville, Mississippi. "Our book budget is so limited. We are totally funded by the local county and city governments and with the job market so bad in our area it has been really devastating to our ability to get new books."

The book drive guidelines are as follows:

1. Books should be in very good or excellent condition.
2. Books on the subject of medicine or health should be no older than 4 years old.
3. CDs and DVDs accepted. No records, VHS or cassette tapes.
4. No magazines.
5. No textbooks.
6. No encyclopedias.

Each MWA chapter has adopted one or two library systems. MWA's goal is to exceed last year's mark of 2,000 donated books. Contact Gay Kinman (gkinman@juno.com) for instructions on how to get your new or gently-used books to a library in need at no cost to you.

Based on the campus of Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts, Reader to Reader, Inc. is a non-profit organization that distributes books to schools and libraries in need. The organization has donated 4 million books to schools and libraries across the United States since its founding in 2001.



SoCal MWA Holiday Party Pics



Host Barbara Cox-Winter and Edward Arno.



(From left) Dianne Emley, Dan Kelly, Gilda Haas, and Denise Hamilton.



A cake to die for.



(Left) Debbi Converse, Craig Westerson, Jeri Westerson, and Meredith Taylor, seated.



Wendy Hornsby and husband.

Sisters in Crime Orange County Presents

ForensicsFest 2011

Join us as crime writers and mystery fans delve into the mysteries of the science of death when the Sisters in Crime Orange County chapter kicks off the New Year with a two-month ForensicsFest in January and February.



January 16, 3:00 pm

Best-selling author of the Irene Kelly thrillers

Jan Burke

will talk about the aftermath of death and the current state of death investigations in the U.S. and how they can affect the living.

February 20, 2:30 pm

The ForensicsFest continues with a star-studded panel of Orange County experts in their fields to discuss their specialties:

Nationally-acclaimed **Dr. Judy Myers Suchey**, forensic anthropologist.

Award-winning author **Dr. D.P.Lyle**, forensics consultant to crime writers and television shows, and author of the Dub Walker thriller, *STRESS FRACTURE* and other books.

Michael Streed, a police, military and government sketch artist.

Gary Bittner, a specialist in crime scene and trauma clean-up.

Both events are Free to the Public
Refreshments provided - Seating is limited
Irvine Ranch Water District

15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, CA 92618

Please make reservations at secretary@ocsistersincrime.org

Visit our Website at www.ocsistersincrime.org



MARCH OF CRIME



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To advertise in TMOC, visit our website at www.SoCalMWA.com for information.

Any opinions expressed herein are those of each author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Mystery Writers of America or the local chapter.

Next Meeting:

Saturday, February 19
11 am to 1:30 pm

**“Everything You Always
Wanted to Know About
Audio Books But Were
Afraid to Ask”**

Tom Bergin’s Tavern

840 S. Fairfax Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90036
(323) 936-7151

11:00 am—Registration and drinks

11:30 am—Lunch

12:30 pm—Program Starts

RSVP and pay at

<http://www.socalmwa.com>

\$15 for members

\$25 for non-members

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LAST WORD



Lots of suspicious characters from the SoCal MWA holiday party in Glendale on December 5.