



THE MARCH OF CRIME

MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER
JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2012

THE LONE RANGER'S DAUGHTER

By CAROL COSTA

I was the Lone Ranger's daughter.

Created in my imagination and nurtured by the radio broadcasts I listened to every week, the character came to life with surprising clarity when I was six years old. Slipping easily into the persona of the masked stranger's daughter, we became as one and I knew everything about life in the Wild West.

The daughter was staying with relatives when her father became the only survivor of the raid that made him don a mask and travel the land righting wrongs.

It was shortly after he teamed up with Tonto that the Lone Ranger appeared to reclaim his only child.

As usual, he arrived in the nick of time. The ranch was in flames and the gypsies had found her hiding place in the barn. A fat ugly man with a gold tooth had her by the arm and was laughing and telling his thin, bedraggled wife that this wisp of a girl would make a good



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THE PRESIDENT'S RAP SHEET GARY PHILLIPS

Most belated happy new year to one and all. Your humble chapter board has meet and we've sketched out talks and presentation for the upcoming year we hope will engage and enlighten the membership. For instance, on tap for Saturday, February 11, we're looking to put on a lunch meeting with a robbery-homicide expert (well, they don't commit robberies and homicides) as our speaker. You'll receive an e-blast soon confirming this with all pertinent details soon.

For your edification both our National and local coffers are fiscally sound, in fact twice a year each chapter has to submit our financial records to an independent auditor to ensure your hard-earned membership dues are accounted for and being spent in the furtherance of our mission and goals.

I'm saddened to leave you noting the unexpected passing of Diana James, the wife of our board member Darrell James. I'm sure you've all heard the news so I won't go on and on, but to say how much this wonderfully upbeat, beautiful person will be missed by us all. Our prayers and best wishes go out to you, Darrell.

Until next time, Gary

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Opinions expressed herein are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Mystery Writers of America, or of the Southern California Chapter.



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YOUR EDITORS SPEAK NATASCHA JAFFA & DAVID J SHERMAN



2012 is a brand new year. Have you thought about your resolutions?

For the past five years, mine have been focused on my career as a writer and crossing that line into “authorship”, but there are always days, months, weeks and even months that I find myself overwhelmed. During those times, I’ve come to live by Maria Connor’s quote from the *Romance Writer’s Report*:

“Become a professional writer; meet deadlines, educate yourself about the market, network, refine and apply your skills, complete and market projects” (RWR 2011).

We’re all in this chapter to succeed and help others succeed along the way, but make sure you are focusing on your own career as well. Don’t let the distractions drag you down. Keep learning. Keep writing. And make 2012 the year to complete your resolutions.

Natascha

WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD

Gary Philips was re-elected as our chapter president

New board of director members:

Rochelle Staab
Sue Ann Jaffarian
Craig Faustus Buck
Marilyn Meredith

Thank you all for serving. We look forward to your insight and leadership.

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slave. The Lone Ranger's daughter was ready to fight for her freedom when Silver and Paint thundered onto the scene. The gypsies fled and the Lone Ranger gathered his daughter into his arms and promised that he would never leave her again.

She was a lovely child, the picture of her mother who had died giving birth to her. The fact that she was a girl made the Lone Ranger and Tonto feel protective, but they soon discovered that the daughter was strong and possessed a wisdom and intelligence far superior to most children of that age.

Tonto captured a wild black stallion for her. The horse looked just like Black Beauty but she named him Midnight. Midnight carried the daughter along between Silver and Paint as they ventured from town to town, fighting injustice and saving lives.

The Lone Ranger, Tonto, and his daughter had many wonderful, exciting adventures. Some of them were similar to the radio dramas; most focused entirely on the Lone Ranger's daughter and her ability to solve crimes and save the day.

The fact that no other living soul knew that she existed didn't matter one bit. It was a marvelous fantasy that I harbored in my mind as I shaped the stories that lulled me to sleep each night. I could barely print my name, but I was a writer, making up stories with a beginning, middle, and end for an audience of one.

After a few years, the Lone Ranger and Tonto rode off into the sunset and faded away. However, the Lone Ranger's daughter remained a fixture in my mind's eye. As the years passed, she grew older and transformed herself into other interesting characters. She became a master detective, Superman's girlfriend, a space traveler, a scientist and the new queen of England. She prompted me to go to the library each week to check out a stack of books to read that kept the fires of my imagination burning brightly.

As I closed each book, I would think about how I would write stories one day and other girls, like me, would find a quiet place to read and learn from them.

After a time, assured that I was following a course that could never be reversed, the Lone Ranger's daughter faded away from my conscious thoughts and took up residence in that deep, mysterious area of the mind called the subconscious. I continued to make up stories to amuse myself, and some were even captured on paper.

My mother thought everything I wrote was destined to be the next great American novel. My teachers said I had a flare for writing. In high school, I wrote for the school paper, won an essay contest and had a short story published. I was certain that I was going to follow my heart and become a writer. Then other things in my life began to take precedence and I put my thoughts of writing on hold.

I was old enough to have real adventures, and I was enjoying the freedom and fun. Although on the surface it appeared that I had given up writing entirely, I never really abandoned the dream. Everything that I did and all the special people I met along the way were carefully filed away in the recesses of my subconscious where the Lone Ranger's daughter continued to reside. She observed all the laughter and the tears, sorted through the maze of people and places and kept them all in order. She knew that someday I would want to retrieve them.

Marriage and motherhood brought a whole new set of adventures. Instead of writing stories I told them aloud, delighting in the laughter and fun I shared with my children.

I continued to promise myself that I would be a writer someday. When the three children were a little older, when they were able to fend for themselves, I would pursue my dream. They were close in age and soon I would have the extra time I needed to write down all the stories that echoed in my mind like the hooves of distant horses.

My youngest child was eight; the time to begin my writing career was quickly approaching. I envisioned the pages filled with the stories I would create. Then the telephone rang. The doctor's nurse said the pregnancy test had come back positive. The pages were suddenly obscured by diapers, nursery rhymes, and all the joys and challenges of bringing another new life into the world.

I was about to put the image of myself as a writer aside and concentrate on getting through the next nine months, when the Lone Ranger's daughter came galloping to the rescue.

"If you wait until everything in your life is in perfect order, you will never be a writer," she said sternly. "If you really want to write, stop making excuses and do it."

A few days later, I enrolled in a creative writing class at the university and bought a second hand typewriter. Once I gave into my muse and let the creative process flow, writing became a priority. I had four kids and a full time job but made time to write every day.

I gathered a fair share of rejection slips, but within a year I sold my first short story and become a regular contributor to a business newspaper. I had finally realized my dream of becoming a professional writer.

I am a playwright and the published author of three nonfiction books, two romance novels, and a mystery series. I have been writing and selling my work for more than twenty years. However, the thrill that comes from creating a new story has never diminished. If anything, it is more fun now than it was when I was six.

As for the Lone Ranger's daughter, she still lives in my subconscious always ready to accompany me on my next adventure.



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.

Carol Costa is a professional writer and editor. She is also an award-winning playwright and a journalist. Carol has worked as an editor of books and newspapers, a business news correspondent, and managed a literary agency. Carol's plays have been published and produced in New York City, Los Angeles, and regional theaters across the country. She is the author of two mystery series, the Dana Sloan series and the Ask Aunt Emma series. Her latest book, The Seventh Messenger, is a historical novel based on a true crime.

CHAPTER NEWS

It is with deep sadness that we have to inform you of the passing of **Jules Sanders**, quite possibly our oldest member at 97. Our condolences go out to his loved ones.

Ed Kovak's second NOLA-set Cliff St. James mystery will be published Dec. 2012, and the third novel in the series is scheduled for 2013 publication. Meanwhile, reviews for *Storm Damage* are in: <http://j.mp/vWU39a>

Dennis Palumbo's newest Daniel Rinaldi mystery, *Fever Dream*, is now available as an e-book on Amazon and directly from the publisher: <http://bit.ly/ruS2ZJ>

Andrew Kaplan's new book, *Scorpion Betrayal* will be published by HarperCollins on March 27, 2012.

Dick Lochte has just published two new suspense novels. *Blues in the Night* (Severn House), and *The Talk Show Murders* (Delacorte).

NEXT TIME...

