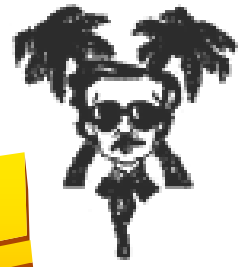


October 2007

# THE MARCH OF CRIME

*MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA – SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER*



## Party of the Year!

Looking for a great evening out? The SoCal MWA Chapter and Los Angeles Sisters in Crime are throwing a bash! There will be a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception (with a no host bar), and we've invited some special guests from our Northern California Chapter:

**Steve Brewer**

**Tim Maleeny**

**Laurie King**

**Cara Black**

Where and when's the fun? Saturday, November 10, 2007 from 5-8 p.m. at the UCLA Faculty Center, 480 Charles Young Drive, Los Angeles (parking lot 2; directions visit <http://facultycenter.ucla.edu/access.htm>). It's FREE TO MEMBERS, and guests are only \$15, but YOU HAVE TO RSVP by November 3rd! No tickets will be sold at the door, so RSVP now. It's easy, just let us know at [sistersinrimela@yahoo.com](mailto:sistersinrimela@yahoo.com). If you are bringing a guest and need to purchase a ticket, you can pay by mail or online. To pay by check for your guest(s), mail payment to MWA/SoCal, 12021 Wilshire Blvd. #506, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (and please write the name of your guest on the "notes" section. If you prefer to pay online via PayPal, please visit [www.socalmwa.com](http://www.socalmwa.com). Parking is \$8 payable at the kiosk at Kilgard and Weltholme. The UCLA campus, and the Faculty Center in particular, are beautiful venues. Great people, great location, great food! How much more can anyone ask? Let's make this event the great happening it deserves to be with a super turnout.

### *Save the date!*

SoCal MWA's Holiday Party will be Tuesday evening, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Jonathan Club in Santa Monica.

Details to come soon!

### October Meeting a "Can't Miss" Event

#### \*NOTE NEW EVENT LOCATION

I know what you're thinking. You are so excited after reading about the November 10<sup>th</sup> party, you can't stand the thought of even more fun. Too bad, brace yourself for another great day of hanging out with your fellow authors and mystery fans, with a great lunch and a super panel presentation to boot. What a great way to spend part of your

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

## **October Luncheon:**

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 1) Sunday afternoon. It will feature two extraordinary writers: Gayle Lynds and Melodie Johnson Howe, who are traveling all the way from Santa Barbara to regale us with their publishing tales.

New York Times bestseller GAYLE LYNDS is the award-winning author of eight international espionage novels, including THE LAST SPYMASTER, THE COIL, MASQUERADE, and MESMERIZED, which have been published in some 20 countries. *Publishers Weekly* lists her work among the top ten spy novels of all time. She is also co-founder and co-president (with David Morrell) of International Thriller Writers, Inc.

After a career in acting, MELODIE JOHNSON HOWE turned to writing. Her first novel, THE MOTHER SHADOW was nominated for an Edgar, Anthony, and an Agatha. Howe's second novel, BEAUTY DIES, soon followed. Her numerous short stories have been published in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, *The Best Short Fiction of the Year*, and other anthologies. She has taught at the UCLA Writers Program and the Santa Barbara Writers Conference.

For this meeting we will be returning to our roots, The Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City, a place where you'll find swans, memories, and an opportunity to meet our guest speakers and network with fellow writers. So for those of you used to going to Taix, take note, or you will be dining there alone. Special thanks to our Program Chair, Patty Smiley, for all her hard work in planning our monthly meetings and panel presentations.

Here are the details:

WHEN: Sunday, October 28, 2007

WHERE: The Sportsmen's Lodge (The Oak Room), 12833 Ventura Blvd., Studio City 91604  
(818) 755-5000

COST: \$25.00 (plus \$6.00 if you use the valet service): \$30 at the door

FOOD: Buffet

TIME: 11:00 a.m. Reception; 11:45 Lunch; 12:30 Program

PAYMENT: Make check payable to MWA SoCal and mail ASAP to 12021 Wilshire Blvd. #506, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or pay with PayPay online at [www.socalmwa.com](http://www.socalmwa.com).

**BY MAIL RESERVATION FORM: Sunday, October 28, 2007 / The Sportsmen's Lounge**

12833 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, 91604

Reception at 11:00 a.m., Luncheon at 11:45, Program at 12:30 p.m.

\$25 member or guest – if paid in advance my mail or online - \$30 at the door

Make checks payable to MWA-SoCal and send to 12021 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 506, Los Angeles, CA 90025

Or, reserve and pay (with PayPal) online at <http://www.socalmwa.com> (click on "reservations").

Member's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ or e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

There is no need to select an entrée as usual. The lunch will be a buffet.

**\*\*\*Don't miss the pop quiz on page 7!!!**

## Fresh Blood

Active:

Rebecca Cantrell (Kailua Kona, HI)

Affiliate:

Virginia Pooler (Sherman Oaks, CA)  
Hannah Dennison (Los Angeles)

*Welcome to our  
new members!*

## You're invited!

*The March of Crime* is at its best with articles from members, information about your new book coming out, and signings. Please submit your articles to me, hopefully with a 700 word limit, to [editor@socalmwa.com](mailto:editor@socalmwa.com) Information about signings and new books go to [sheila@sheilalowe.com](mailto:sheila@sheilalowe.com). This is YOUR newsletter. Fill it with information YOU want to see.

Your editor,

*-Randall Hicks*

## President's Rap

On my way back home from BoucherCon 2007 in Anchorage, I rode in a taxi with another writer, from New York City. After remarking on the mild weather and the interesting city, our conversation turned to the conference itself. This was his first BoucherCon, and I - the "old hand" of at least four others - launched into a comparison of this and prior conventions. It was small, much smaller than the Madison gathering in 2006, probably only 700 attendees. Of this population, a third was authors and others in the industry, the balance readers, fans, and groupies.

We discussed the numerous panels, and I commented on how many of the topics blended in to one another - defining "noir," considering "hard-boiled" fiction, contemplating the appeal of "bad boys and dirty girls." In fact, panels almost uniformly divide into two categories. The first is how to write. The former is an expansive topic, ranging from discussions by agents and editors about the market to experienced authors sharing the horrors and hilarities of the book tour, from newly-coined writers explaining how they achieved publication to publishers warning of the impending

changes in the industry. Some in the audiences took notes; some merely nodded wisely or looked contemplative, thinking of their own experiences. Readers too enjoyed these topics, gaining a sense of being an "insider" of the mystery genre.

More interesting to me, however, was the second topic: Why we write. Although some of the speakers disguised their talks as explanations of the appeal of the genre or the differences between "genre" fiction and "literary" fiction (Dana Cameron slyly terms the latter "non-genre" fiction), the fundamental issue pondered by the speakers was the nature of fiction itself. S. J. Rozan suggested that each genre represents an archetype and each writer in the genre is compelled to tell the archetypal story over and over. The mystery archetype, it's been often said, is the discovery of order amidst apparent chaos. This is the essence of the detective's work - sifting the "facts" to discover the "truth," the explanation for the events, "whodunnit."

I believe that in fact, this is the basis of all fiction: the imposition of order on the chaos of life.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

## **Transom Notes**

### **New Releases**

Bruce Hale's latest Chet Gecko mystery, *Hiss Me Deadly* (Harcourt Inc.) is scheduled for release this month. Chet Gecko is a lizard, but he's a grade-school Philip Marlowe. *The School Library Journal* described the series as "A mixture of stand-up comedy, Raymond Chandler mysteries, old films, and a fourth grader on an overdose of sugar." [www.brucehale.com](http://www.brucehale.com).

And continuing in the reptilian theme...Linda O. Johnston's next Kendra Ballantyne, Pet-Sitter mystery, *The Fright of the Iguana* is an October 2007 release from Berkley Prime Crime.

### **Events**

On Saturday, October 6, at 2:00 PM, MWA SoCal members Linda O. Johnston and Kathryn Lilley, who both blog on [www.KillerHobbies.blogspot.com](http://www.KillerHobbies.blogspot.com), will discuss Killer Hobbies (what else?) at Mysterious Galaxy Bookstore in San Diego.

Saturday October 6, Capital Crime Press authors Bruce Cook, Robert Fate, and Sheila Lowe will be staffing a booth and appearing on an 11:30 panel at the Duarte Book Festival.

Eric Stone's signing schedule includes Mystery & Imagination on Oct 4<sup>th</sup>, The Mystery Bookstore Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>, Metropolis Books Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, Mysteries to Die For Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>, and Book 'Em October 13<sup>th</sup>. For details: [www.ericstone.com](http://www.ericstone.com).

Robert S. Levinson will discuss and read from his current thriller, *Where the Lies Begin* and the forthcoming *In the Key of Death*, as well as earlier works, Thursday, Oct. 18, 10 a.m., at the Braille Institute of Los Angeles library. The Institute library is part of a national network providing braille and recorded material for loan to more than 30,000 blind, visually impaired and reading disabled patrons in Southern California.

### **In Other News...**

Paul Guyot has sold a pilot to A&E Television. The untitled series is about an estranged father and son, both detectives, who go about their jobs in vastly different ways. It will be helmed by Emmy nominated director Peter Horton. [www.paulguyot.net](http://www.paulguyot.net).

Sheila Lowe's recent guest blog on <http://poesdeadlydaughters.blogspot.com> caused a mild ruckus on DorothyL when a member challenged her assertion that forensic graphologists testify in court. [www.claudiaroseseries.com](http://www.claudiaroseseries.com)

## **DON'T GET BYTTEN: Viral Infection**

Last month I told you how most firewalls for home computers are worse than useless, and that you should probably just erase/shut down yours. If I tell you, this month, to go ahead and dump your household antivirus software, too, then I'll probably just come across as a contrary curmudgeon.

I can live with that.

The reason I'm against antivirus applications is not because I want to make you more

vulnerable, or that I think that there is no real threat from malicious code-- actually, quite the opposite. I think the greatest single threat to home users is probably a form of malware known as the Trojan horse (which might make a good topic for next month's column)...but I don't think that your antivirus software is going to help you counter that threat.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

*BYTTEN* (Cont'd from page 4)

No, I think that the largest, and most popular, antivirus software is worse than useless for the same reason that home firewalls are worse than useless: they keep you from using your computer the way you want to use it. With the firewalls, that's simply annoying and frustrating-- with antivirus software, that's downright ironic.

See, the very definition of "computer virus" (or "malware," or "malicious code") is this:

"A piece of software on your computer which does things without your knowledge or consent, and which might not be in your best interest."

Which, sadly, describes the most popular antivirus software suites perfectly.

I tried to explain this to the very polite Customer Service representative when I called to cancel my subscription to a popular antivirus service, back in 2002. She kept asking me, "And why is it that you want to cancel?"

I would reply: "Because your program harvests my information for your company's own purposes, and because your program downloads stuff without asking me, and won't let ME download stuff when I want to, and because it bogs down my whole system with some very heavy processes, and, basically, because your program is a virus."

She would then try to restate my concern based on an option off her checklist. "So, just to confirm, you got a virus, and that makes you unhappy with our product?"

And I would reply, patiently, "Nnnnnooooooooo....." And we'd start all over again.

So I don't think the major antivirus vendors aren't getting the message.

As a matter of fact, they keep adding more and more "features," thus encumbering what are already bulky, corpulent applications with still-yet-more useless geegaws. The only thing saving antivirus vendors from imploding altogether is the fact that microprocessor speeds continue to increase at a rate great enough so that computer manufacturers can make new computers that are able to handle the grossly-obese antivirus packages without freezing up completely.

What to do? How can you stay safe and not face the possibility of crashing your machine?

There are plenty of small, tight antivirus products out there, programs which only do what you tell them to do, when you tell them to do it. Some of them are even available for free. Ask some of the people you know who are good with computers...get a good sample of opinions - say, three or four. Then go with the most popular suggestion.

Simply put: big, expensive antivirus programs won't guarantee you will avoid malicious code. Neither will small ones. But at least you won't have to pay for the small ones.

Again, if there's any particular topic you'd like to see addressed in these pages, or if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me, via the information posted on my website: [www.benmalisow.com](http://www.benmalisow.com).

-Ben Malisow

*Ben's first book, **1,001 Things To Do If You Dare**, was launched by Adams Media in April. His second, a book on counterterrorism from Chelsea House, is due out next year. Ben has provided computer and information security services to DARPA, the Department of Homeland Security, and the FBI, among others. He holds an MBA, a CISSP, a CISM, among other alphabet-soup-flavored goodies.*

## **Publisher Guidelines Article Postponed**

In the September issue of *The Third Degree*, I stated that the October issue would include members' questions about MWA's new publisher guidelines, and answers from the national office.

Due to my own fault in providing the questions late in the month to national (the time spent in going through the questions to make sure each issue was covered, editing them to a publishable length, etc., took more time than expected), and some new dialogue regarding which questions are appropriate to answer, it appears the article will not appear until next month. My apologies.

-Randall Hicks (editor)

## **PRESIDENT'S RAP**

(Cont'd from page 3)

Everyone's life story begins and ends in the same fashion. The writer of fiction takes a segment of that life, or multiple lives, and makes it into a coherent *story*, with a beginning, middle, and end. In life, stories have no beginnings and no endings, but in fiction, we require *order*, something we can apprehend. Selecting among the "facts" is the author's job, and without careful selection, the reader is unsatisfied or confused.

As I thought these deep philosophical thoughts, I considered also why the writers who came to Anchorage were there. It was helpful to attend panels on the craft of writing and the skills of marketing. It was interesting to hear other writers' thoughts on the big questions I've suggested were debated. It was pleasant to meet fans and to think that by being an impressive contributor to a panel discussion, I might induce one or two people to buy my books. In truth, however, I was there for totally different, wholly selfish reasons: to remind myself that I'm part of a community.

It's proverbial that writing is a solitary profession, and that is its frank appeal to many. A conference like BoucherCon, however, reminds us that *being* a writer need not be solitary. There are other writers, publishers, agents, editors, booksellers, and readers. Most of all, there are friends. Over the last 10 years, I've traveled to many, many conferences focused on Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes (and most recently one on Dracula). A dear friend of mine observed that in the beginning, we attend these meetings because of the subject matter; after a while, however, we come mainly for the simple pleasures of friendship. In these days of easy electronic conversation, we still crave the physical presence of comfortable companions. BoucherCon, ThrillerFest, Sleuthfest, Left Coast Crime—and of course our own SoCal MWA meetings—fill that vital need.

We have a great lineup of programs scheduled for the balance of 2007 - an interview of superstar Gayle Lynds by Melanie Johnson Howe on October 28, a November 10 party at the UCLA Faculty Center with Sisters in Crime-L.A. and four NorCal special guests, and on December 18, our annual holiday party at the Jonathan Club in Santa Monica. I hope to see you at one or all of these!

*-Les Klinger*

## **The Crime Calendar**

Cape Fear Crime Festival – October 26-28, Wilmington, NC <http://www.capefearcrimefestival.org/>

Magna Cum Murder – October 26-28, Muncie, Indiana <http://www.magnacummurder.com>

Men of Mystery – November 3, Irvine, CA Contact [jhansen36@juno.com](mailto:jhansen36@juno.com)

New England Crimebake – November 9-11, Lowell, MA <http://www.mwane.org/crimebake/>

Left Coast Crime – March 6-9, 2008, Denver, CO <http://www.lcc2008.com>

Las Vegas Writers Conference – April 17-19, 2008, Las Vegas, NV  
<http://www.lasvegaswritersconference.com>

Are you going to be part of a mystery convention not listed here? Tell us, and we'll list it.

Write to Randall Hicks at: [editor@socalmwa.com](mailto:editor@socalmwa.com)



Let's play . . .

*Can you name our September panelists?*



If you were at our September meeting, you enjoyed hearing from the above distinguished panel of authors. If not, let's see if you can identify them:

On far left is she...

- a) The beautiful actress, Ellen Pompeo, playing Dr. Meredith Grey on *Grey's Anatomy*.
- b) The inventor of Liquid Paper.
- c) *L.A. Times* bestselling author, Patty Smiley.

Second from left is...

- a) Academy Award winning actress, Julia Roberts.
- b) The secret woman who dumped Brad Pitt before he settled for Jennifer Aniston and Angelina Jolie.
- c) Agatha, Anthony and Macavity award winner, Harley Jane Kozak.

Third from the left is...

- a) Gorgeous actress, Michelle Ryan, star of NBC's new *Bionic Woman*.
- b) Billionaire inventor of plasma TVs.
- c) *LA Times* bestselling author, Susan Kandel.

On the far right, the gentleman is...

- a) Actor, Robert Redford.
- b) Retired world mixed-martial arts champion. Gonzo MacGilroy.
- c) Bestselling author, Robert Levinson.



# TMOC

## MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA

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