



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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California Crime Writers Conference

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Book Signings: Are They Worth it? by Rosemary Mild

My husband, Larry, and I grappled with the gawky metal frame of our ten-by-ten-foot tent. It was like trying to open Godzilla's umbrella. We tugged and yanked. Yes! The tent snapped into position. But something was missing: the cover! We knew where it was: in our basement in Severna Park, Maryland, 35 miles away.

This was a Saturday morning in August 2005. We had just arrived at the annual North Beach Bay Fest for a two-day book signing. We were among 100 craft and food vendors setting up on the boardwalk of North Beach, a charming town on the Chesapeake Bay.

Already 95 degrees at 8 a.m., the sun beat down, ready to deep-fry us like a funnel cake. I jumped in our minivan, returning with the tent cover two hours later. Ah, blessed shade. Finally, we were primed to sell our books. Up to now, we'd been spoiled. For two years we sold our books in the Maryland Writers Association booth. But they stopped attending. Now we had to rent our own.

The crowds strolled by, eating, sun burning, often ignoring us. We welcomed visitors—sometimes children more eager than their parents. I threatened silently: Don't you dare drip that Sno-Cone on our books!

Late Saturday afternoon, we saw an ominous chop on the Bay. With a storm brewing, we packed up everything and departed—soaked in sweat and reminded of how physical an outdoor signing can be. We drove home through a lightning-filled thunderstorm. Sunday morning, assembling our site once more (in sunshine), we discovered the impact of the storm. The professional-grade tents had survived just fine. The lightweight ones like ours that vendors had left in place were all demolished—dashed against the boardwalk railings. One floated sadly away in the Bay. We sold 74 books. And the local Lighthouse Marketplace, where I stopped to buy sun block (something else we'd forgotten), took five books on consignment.

In July 2013, after twenty years as winter "snowbirds" in Honolulu, we moved here. Minus our tent, thank heaven! Now we stay indoors hawking our books. In the last four months of 2014, we did signings at huge expos and craft fairs—two

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The President's Rap Sheet

Craig Faustus Buck

January was a busy month for meetings. The national MWA board met in NYC on the 17th and the local chapter board met in Sherman Oaks on the 24th. These face-to-face meetings happen only once a year so they tend to be jam-packed and exhausting, but I'm excited about the future.

On the national level, the organization is struggling to find its way through the chaotic landscape of the evolving publishing revolution. Still, struggling beats resisting. Chief among the issues are membership rules for self-published authors. Creating an avenue for these writers, while still maintaining professional standards, will take time to craft. The new board seems determined to enact such meaningful changes not only to keep up with new publishing paradigms, but to broaden our diversity and to offer more benefits to our current and prospective members.

I don't mean to sugarcoat anything. Change is coming down the pike at the speed of a rat through a python. But WMA is seventy years old. Institutional changes don't come easy, especially when many will require bylaw revisions that must be voted on by the general membership in elections that only come once a year.



MWA reception at the Mysterious Bookshop. L-R: Midwest chapter president Clare O'Donohue, Directors-at-Large Linda Joffe Hall and Hilary Davidson, and Craig Faustus Buck

On the chapter level things are moving more quickly and promise a year of exciting speaker luncheons, free (and far-flung) events, book festivals, a world-class writer's conference, parties, casual get-togethers, Noirs at the Bar and more. The only way to benefit from your MWA membership is to participate in what we have to offer, to network, share insights and information with other writers, and soak up the educational programming. You'll find notices about these opportunities in regular email alerts, our monthly newsletter and on our website (<http://www.socalmwa.com>). Come on out; invite your friends; and exploit the value of your membership. Ta ta.

Craig Faustus Buck

Chapter Officers

President: Craig Faustus Buck
VP: TBD
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Secretary: Terri Nolan

Board of Directors

Matt Coyle
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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

I've wanted to take THE MARCH OF CRIME monthly for awhile now. A bi-monthly publication just isn't enough to report everything that's going on in a chapter as large as ours is. Still, time constraints made it a difficult prospect and I kind of just accepted that I'd publish every two months and try to pack as much information into those issues as possible.

So when Craig recently asked if I'd be up for publishing monthly for precisely the reasons I noted above, I took it as a sign that it was finally time to ramp up the publishing schedule. And rather than dreading the additional work, I'm looking forward to it. The truth is that I really enjoy editing this newsletter and I hope to make it as useful as possible for you.

You might notice some subtle format changes as we move forward. Some issues might be shorter or have less editorial content, depending upon who submits what and when. Thanks to Rosemary Mild for sharing her and her husband's experience with book signings this month. Overall, my goal is to keep you up-to-date as I can on the events and issues that are important to our membership.

Holly

The March of Crime is the newsletter of the Southern California Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America.

Editor: Holly West

Columnists:
Gregory Von Dare
Stephanie Stolinsky

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

Contact us at:
themarchofcrime@gmail.com

FRESH BLOOD

SoCal MWA welcomes its new and returning members:

Allison Hock, Active, Reinstatement
Matthew Quirk, Active



Like us on Facebook

OVER the TRANSOM

Member News

Thomas B. Sawyer's novel, *CROSS PURPOSES*, was selected as one of the best books of 2014 by [King's River Life Magazine](#).

Gwendolyn Womack's debut novel, *THE MEMORY PAINTER*, will be published by Picador on April 28, 2015. Available in ebook and hardback.

Annette Mahon has sold *SLAY BELLS*, the sixth book in her St. Rose Quilting Bee mystery series. It will be out in October 2015 from Five Star/Gale/Cengage.

Craig Faustus Buck's noir short story "Honeymoon Sweet," a tale of newlyweds who break into a Malibu beach house for a honeymoon that goes sour, has been purchased by Plan-B Magazine for publication in their Valentine's Day issue on February 13, 2015. The story first appeared in the Bouchercon 2014 anthology *MURDER AT THE BEACH*.

Barry Wiley's mystery short story, "The Great Houdini! Murder Case", has been nominated for the 2015 Derringer Award for the best in short mystery fiction. Finalists will be announced in March and the winners in April. The story is based on a conversation Wiley had some years ago with Walter B. Gibson, the creator of *The Shadow* and confidant of Houdini.

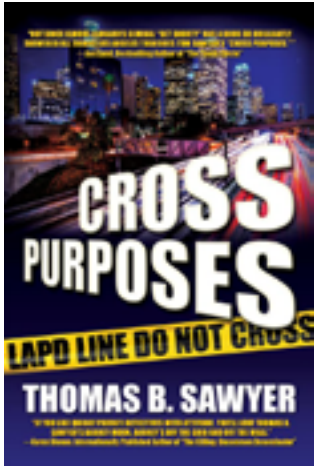
VARIETY recently published an article about creative freedom in light of the Sony and Paris attacks in which **Andrew Kaplan** is quoted. [Click here](#) to read the article in its entirety. Kaplan is the author of two bestselling thriller series: "Scorpion" and "Homeland," including his latest, *HOMELAND: SAUL'S GAME*.

Amnon Kabatchnik's *BLOOD ON THE STAGE*, 480 B.C to 1600 A.D. garnered warm endorsements by two gurus in the field of suspense: Jon L. Breen in *Mystery Scene* #137 and Marvin Lachman in *Deadly Pleasures Mystery Magazine*, #75.

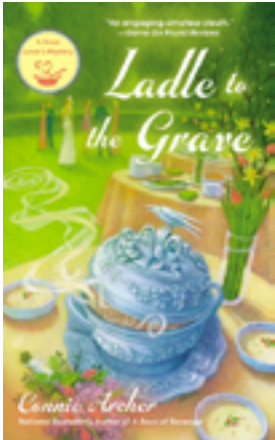
Brash Books, co-founded by MWA/SoCal member **Lee Goldberg**, is republishing *POOR POOR OPHELIA* by Carolyn Westin in February. It's a police procedural set in 1970s Santa Monica and was the basis for the hit TV series "The Streets of San Francisco." Also in February, they are republishing Maxine O'Callaghan's *HIT & RUN*, the third Delilah West PI book by the SoCal mystery writer who blazed the trail for **Sue Grafton**, Marcia Muller and Sara Paretsky. In May, Brash Books is publishing MWA/SoCal member Craig Faustus Buck's new novel *GO DOWN HARD*, a tantalizing tale of sex, thugs, and rock-n-roll. It features enthusiastic blurbs from MWA/SoCal authors **T. Jefferson Parker**, **Thomas Perry**, **Gary Phillips** and **Patricia Smiley**.

Do you have writing news to share with our chapter?

Email it to TheMarchof-Crime@gmail.com by February 20 for inclusion in the March 2015 issue.



OVER the TRANSOM



Joan Hansen, Founder of Men of Mystery and the Literary Guild of Orange County Festival of women Authors, is thrilled to announce that one of this year's featured authors, Karin Slaughter, is a finalist for this year's Edgar Award. [See page 8](#) for more information about this event.

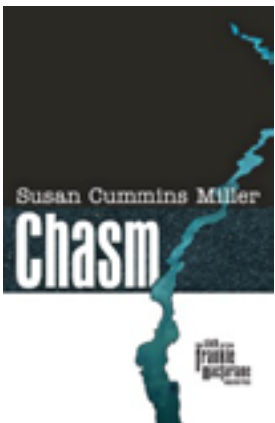
Connie Archer's fourth book in the Soup Lover's Mystery series from Berkley Prime Crime, LADLE TO THE GRAVE, will be released on March 3, 2015. *A woman poisoned at a pagan ritual, a dead man floating in the creek. Are these deaths connected and will more victims fall prey to a killer?*

Robert S. Levinson's latest crime novel, THE EVIL DEEDS WE DO, was released by Five Star on January 21, 2015. Booklist says "The writing is crisp and hard-boiled, reminiscent of the golden age of Chandler and Hammett but with a modern twist." [See page 6](#) for information about the official book launch and related appearances.



Paul D. Marks will be a regular monthly blogger at www.sleuthsayers.org beginning on February 24. He'll continue to blog every other Friday on Criminal Minds at www7.criminalminds.blogspot.com. Additionally, his story, "Fade Out," will be on Akashic's Mondays are Murder in August. Finally, he and Andrew McAleer have edited the mystery anthology COAST TO COAST: MURDER FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA (tentative title), coming soon from Down and Out Books.

Hallmark Movies & Mysteries announces Alison Sweeney and Cameron Mathison cast in "Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder" movie based on New York Times bestselling author **Joanne Fluke's** Hannah Swensen mystery series. The first in the original movie franchise is set to premiere Spring 2015 and is produced by Brad Krevoy Television and Stephanie Germain Productions, with Brad Krevoy, Stephanie Germain and Eric Jarboe as executive producers. **Fluke's** newest Hannah Swensen mystery, "Double Fudge Brownie Murder," 18th in the series, will be released in hardcover in March 2015 by Kensington Publishing.



CHASM, **Susan Cummins Miller's** sixth Frankie MacFarlane, Geologist, mystery, will be released by Texas Tech University Press on March 1, and launched at the Tucson Festival of Books. The suspense/thriller is set on a whitewater-rafting trip in Grand Canyon National Park.

Member APPEARANCES

Naomi Hirahara and **Connie Archer** will be at Book Carnival on April 11th at 2 PM (348 S. Tustin, Orange 92966) and Mystery Ink on April 12th at noon (8907 Warner Ave. #135, Huntington Beach, CA 92647).

Robert S. Levinson officially launches his latest crime novel, *THE EVIL DEEDS WE DO*, Wednesday, February 11, at 7:30pm, at Skylight Books in Los Angeles, (1818 North Vermont Ave.; phone 323.660.1175), with light refreshments followed by a reading, Q&A and signing. Appearances are scheduled to follow on Saturday, February 21, 1 p.m., at Book Carnival in Orange, CA (348 South Tustin St.; phone 714.538.3210 or 800/963.9266) and Saturday, February 28, 1 p.m., at Mysterious Galaxy in San Diego (5943 Balboa Ave., Ste. #100; phone 858.268.4747).

Former chapter president of the MWASoCal chapter, **Naomi Hirahara**, is organizing a group of writers to attend the opening screening of the film, “Man from Reno,” on the evening of Friday, March 27, at the Laemmle’s Pasadena Playhouse 7, 673 East Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91101.

“I recently met the director, Dave Boyle, who is a huge fan of mysteries. Since his film features a crime novelist, I thought it would be fun to support his effort,” said Hirahara. The independent film won the Best Narrative Feature Award at the 2014 Los Angeles Film Festival. Boyle and his cast will be available after Friday’s screening for a question-and-answer session.

About the film: In a small town south of San Francisco, Sheriff Paul Del Moral (veteran character actor Pepe Serna) is driving home through the fog one night when he accidentally strikes a pedestrian, a lone Japanese man. However, before an investigation can take place, the man disappears from the hospital without a trace. At the same time, Japanese mystery author Aki Akahori (Ayako Fujitani) takes a trip to San Francisco in order to escape the press tour for her latest book--a potboiler in her world-famous “Inspector Takabe” series. Feeling lonely and vulnerable, she begins a romantic affair with a mysterious Japanese traveller from Reno (Japanese superstar Kazuki Kitamura) who is staying in the same hotel. Her new lover is charismatic and charming but abruptly disappears from the hotel, leaving behind his suitcase and a trail of questions.



If you might be interested in joining the group at a discounted rate, please contact Naomi at bachi@naomihirahara.com and she will provide you with more details as she receives them. For more theaters, info and to watch the trailer, please visit www.manfromrenomovie.com.



2015 California Crime Writers Conference

Culver City, California
June 6 & 7, 2015 (Saturday & Sunday)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Los Angeles - Westside
6161 West Centinela Avenue, Culver City, California

SPECIAL GUESTS:



Charlaine Harris



Anne Perry

Sisters in Crime LA and SoCalMWA welcome both members and non-members to the 2015 California Crime Writers Conference. Join us in Culver City, California for a weekend of workshops geared to the needs of both emerging and established mystery writers. Attendees will enjoy tracks on forensics, craft, industry, and marketing, along with other mystery-themed activities. A manuscript critique is available as an add-on option.

[Registration now open!](#)

Book Signings: Are They Worth it? ([Continued from pg 1](#))

of them entire weekends. Plus four one-day events: at our synagogue; and at three elementary schools, always in the cafeteria, squished onto one six-foot table. At the last one we sold 49 books in six hours. We schlep our books in clear plastic bins so we can easily see what's inside: small bins so we don't stress out our backs. Larry found us an online source for cardboard tabletop bookshelves: convenient professional-looking displays.

You'll notice that none of these are book festivals. Our sales are better at venues where we're the only authors. (Our signing at Border's in Honolulu in 2010 ended disastrously. Shortly after, Border's declared bankruptcy and fleeced us out of our profits). We do take part in one book event: The annual two-day Hawaii Book and Music Festival. Our Sisters in Crime/Hawaii Chapter rents a booth. We take turns staffing it, and last year enjoyed doing readings of our own stories in our recent anthology *Mystery in Paradise: 13 Tales of Suspense*.

So why do we do these signings at all? We're now Indie authors using Lightning Source, an excellent printer owned by Ingram. If we had a major publisher placing our books in Costco, Barnes & Noble, etc. maybe we wouldn't have to. But we make money! And best of all, we love meeting the public and personalizing our autographs. Often visitors are already our fans, looking for our new books.

Rosemary and Larry Mild are cheerful partners in crime. In 2015 their Dan & Rivka Sherman series—*DEATH GOES POSTAL* and *DEATH TAKES A MISTRESS*—will be joined by *DEATH STEALS A HOLY BOOK*; Larry's textbook on mystery writing; and *MURDER, FANTASY, AND WEIRD TALES*, their new collection of stories. Rosemary's memoirs are *LOVE! LAUGH! PANIC! LIFE WITH MY MOTHER*, and *MIRIAM'S WORLD--AND MINE*, a tribute to the beloved daughter they lost in the terrorist bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Literary Guild of O.C.
22nd Festival of Women's Authors

"Where the West meets the best."

May 9, 2015
 Irvine Marriott Hotel
 Tickets: \$80

Featured Authors

Karin Slaughter, finalist for the 2015 Edgar Award for Best Novel

Sena Jeter Nasland

Jane Smiley

Tara Conklin

Susan Elia MacNeal

Candice Millard

Gabrielle Zevin

Attendees will select one author to listen to during the breakout session.

For more information:
<http://LGOC.org>

**Join our SoCalMWA
 Yahoo! Group**

Email
SoCalMWA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
 to join (members only)

Pitch Your Ideas

TMOC is looking for informative articles written by our members. Email us at themarchofcrime@gmail.com with your pitches.

Men of Mystery

On Saturday, the **14**th of November, **2015**, the **16**th Men of Mystery will be held at the Irvine Marriott Hotel.

More info:
<http://menofmystery.org>

A green banner with a ribbon-like shape at the top and bottom. The word "Crime" is written in a cursive font, and "CALENDAR" is written in a bold, sans-serif font.

Crime CALENDAR

Criminal Happenings in 2015

January 17 - [From Film to Page](#), Scottsdale, AZ
February 6-8 - [Love is Murder](#), Chicago, IL
March 12-15 - [Left Coast Crime](#), Portland, OR
March 14-15 - [Tuscon Festival of Books](#), Tuscon, AZ
April 18-19 - [LA Times Festival of Books](#), Los Angeles, CA
February 26 - March 1 - [Sleuthfest](#), Deerfield Beach, FL
May 1 - 3 - [Malice Domestic](#), Bethesda, MD
May 14-17 - [Crime Fest](#), Bristol, UK
June 6-7 - [California Crime Writers Conference](#), Culver City, CA
July 24-27 - [Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference](#), Corte Madera, CA
September 26 - Gumbo Party at the Fitzhugh's
October 8-11 - [Bouchercon](#), Raleigh, NC
November 14 - [16th Annual Men of Mystery Conference](#), Irvine, CA

The March of Crime would like to thank this issue's contributors:
Rosemary Mild

A green banner with a ribbon-like shape at the top and bottom. The word "The" is written in a cursive font, and "LAST WORD" is written in a bold, sans-serif font.

The LAST WORD

"Someone poisons your pug, that's not someone you can trust."

--Becky Masterman, FEAR THE DARKNESS