



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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SoCalMWA Holiday Bash

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2016

6:30 - 10:30pm



We'll meet you at

CHLOE'S

(through the secret door to the left of the brewery bar)

**Golden Road Brewery
5410 W San Fernando Rd
Los Angeles, CA 90039**

The entrance is west of the train tracks.
If you're coming from the 5 or the 134, cross the
tracks to get to the party.

Happy Holidays

from

THE MARCH OF CRIME

See you in 2017!

[Please RSVP](#)



The President's Rap Sheet

Craig Faustus Buck

New Year's Eve is fast approaching, and with it ends my two-year tour of duty as your SoCal Chapter Prez. It's been a wild ride. Aside from the chapter's activities in the L.A. area (by far, our densest population core), we've sponsored events in Orange County, San Diego, Northern L.A. County, Arizona, Nevada, and soon Hawaii (we're hosting a chapter Happy Hour at Left Coast Crime Honolulu in March). We've heard from ATF agents, homicide detectives, crime scene experts, forensic psychologists, women in law enforcement, various authors, marketing experts, e-publishers, trad publishers, editors, and even Dashiell Hammett's granddaughter/historian. We've networked and talked writing at book swaps, food trucks, cocktail soirées, craft workshops, the California Crime Writers Conference (the next one's coming up and limited spots are filling fast, so [sign up](#) soon), the homemade gumbo and home-brewed ale party, signing booths at the LA Times and Tucson Book Festivals, Tam O'Shanter luncheons, speakeasy holiday parties (if you haven't [RSVPd](#) for Dec 17, don't tarry), chapter Happy Hours at Bouchercon and Left Coast Crime, and a steamy panel on hardboiled sex that almost got us banned from the largest independent bookstore in California. Phew!

However, my hopes for my tenure ranged far beyond our social/educational calendar. My grand mission was to try and push MWA to become more inclusive. Like the Motion Picture Academy, MWA has become increasingly resistant to change and less relevant over the years. Our membership is aging because our membership requirements are antiquated and our focus has not changed with the times. MWA's continued existence depends on new members, and to grow we have to open our arms to more writers. We have to stay fluid in order to flow with a rapidly changing publishing world, and we have to offer value to younger and more diverse authors, many of whom have been underserved by the traditional publishing establishment and forced to self-publish.

In order to attract and to promote the voices of these authors--including writers of color, LGBTQ writers, women writers, and older writers--we must provide a viable path to membership for self-publishers. To the current national board's credit, such a path is in the works, but I fear the initial financial requirements will be too high for most self-published authors, posing a barrier to entry instead of an enticement.

Happily, I'm confident our next chapter president **Elizabeth Little**, and our excellent board of directors-to-be, will carry on the fight. Change is rarely easy, especially in an organization that's been around for three-quarters of a century, but in the spirit of our SoCal chapter membership, we will continue to prod MWA to shoot the curl of the wave of the future.

[continued on pg 10](#)

Chapter Officers

President: Craig Faustus Buck
VP: Sue Ann Jaffarian
Treasurer: Eric Beetner
Secretary: Terri Nolan

Board of Directors

Shannon Baker
 Matt Coyle
 Jessica Kaye
 Elizabeth Little
 Paul D. Marks
 Travis Richardson
 James Ziskin

Mystery Writers of America
 Southern California Chapter
 3520 Overland Avenue #A-82
 Los Angeles, CA 90034

Contact: info@socalmwa.com
 Website: <http://socalmwa.com>

Like us on Facebook
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Email SoCalMWA-subscribe@yahooogroups.com to join
 (members only)

NATIONAL OFFICE

Mystery Writers of America
 1140 Broadway #1507
 New York, NY 10001
 t. 212.888.8171
 f. 212.888.8107

mwa@mysterywriters.org
<http://mysterywriters.org>



The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

This month, we bid a reluctant farewell to two important members of SoCalMWA's *The March of Crime* team.

Craig Faustus Buck has been SoCalMWA's fearless leader these past two years, and it's been a delight to work with him. I'm impressed by the enthusiasm he's brought to our chapter and, in particular, the fantastic events we've enjoyed during his tenure. Heartfelt thanks to Craig and the entire SoCalMWA board who have worked hard to make our chapter one of the best in the nation.

December's issue features **Gregory Von Dare's** last "Hollow Points" column. Greg started the column before I came on board as editor in 2013 and during that time, he's educated us on a variety of firearm-related topics. [His final column on railguns](#) touches on firearm technology of the future. Apropos, considering we're all looking to the future as we head into 2017. For his part, Greg will be compiling an eBook of his "Hollow Points" columns next year, so be on the lookout.

Speaking of the future, I look forward to working with the incoming board, especially **Elizabeth Little**, who'll be taking over as President.

Thank you all for a terrific year. I wish you all a wonderful holiday and I'll see you in 2017.

Holly

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

Editor: [Holly West](#)

December Contributors:
Gregory Von Dare
Terri Nolan

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

SoCalMWA welcomes its new and returning members:

Danny Gardner



OVER the TRANSOM

Member News

Thomas Perry's 24th novel, *THE OLD MAN*, will be published on January 3 by Mysterious Press/Grove Atlantic. *Kirkus Reviews* has called it “Swift, unsentimental, and deeply satisfying.”

The third book in **Mike Befeler's** Paul Jacobson Geezer-lit Mystery Series, *SENIOR MOMENTS ARE MURDER*, is now available as a trade paperback published by Encircle Publications.

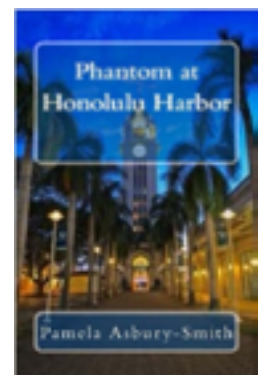
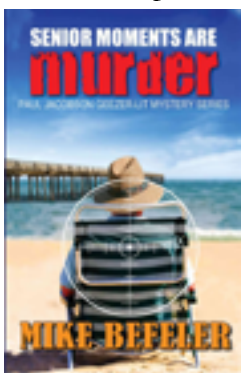
Matt Coyle's *DARK FISSURES*, the third book in the Anthony Award-winning Rick Cahill crime series, will be published by Oceanview Publishing on Dec. 6. *The vise is tightening around Rick Cahill. The law wants him behind bars. The bank wants his house. His clients motives are sketchy. And shadowy killers want him dead.*

Blackstone Audio releases **John Shepphird's** *THE SHILL TRILOGY* December 20th. Read by Kera O'Bryon, the audiobook combines the novellas *THE SHILL*, *KILL THE SHILL* and *BEWARE THE SHILL*. A “tangled maze of deception, depravity, and murder,” Audible members are encouraged to use a credit. Sample the audiobook at Downpour.com or Amazon.com. Produced by the author, John Shepphird is a Shamus Award-winning author and writer/director of TV movies. Voice artist Kera O'Bryon is an Emmy-nominated actress and singer.

Paul D. Marks' story “Ghosts of Bunker Hill” appears in the December issue of *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. Paul is honored to be included in the last issue of Ellery Queen's 75th year celebration.

Robert S. Levinson makes his first appearance in *Mystery Weekly Magazine* with “The Body in the Backyard.” Copies are available to paid subscribers on digital newsstands or the MW web site. A paperback edition will be available after December 1 on Amazon. This bit of holiday season cheer follows earlier word that Bob's story “With Eyes Like That” appears in the December issue of *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*.

Pamela Asbury-Smith's *PHANTOM AT HONOLULU HARBOR*, an archeological mystery with elements of Hawaiian legend, is now available. The book draws from Pamela's background in both law enforcement and archaeology, along with her experiences of 15 years of life in Hawaii. Positive reviews and requests for a series has led Pamela to work on a follow-up set in Waikiki.



Member APPEARANCES

Andrew Neiderman will appear at the Palm Springs Library on January 11 at 6:30pm to discuss his authorship of V.C. Andrews novels and his development of *THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE* as both a stage play and a stage musical, which will premiere in South Korea, now the world's third biggest producer of stage musicals. Neiderman has authored 46 thrillers as well as over 75 V.C. Andrews novels. Contact the Palm Springs Library for additional information.



Andrew Neiderman

Sheila Lowe recently testified in a real-life murder mystery. Her client, James Lypps, was charged in the death of his wife, serving two years in jail before his acquittal. At trial, Lowe demonstrated that he did not have the skill to simulate the two suicide letters he was accused of writing, and that his wife, Sherre Neal-Lypps, was the writer. Considering the handwriting evidence, medical testimony and character witnesses, the jury was convinced of his innocence. Some of Neal-Lypps's back story (she had allegedly attacked her husband and was a serial philanderer who was medicated for severe sciatica pain), just might make it into a future Forensic Handwriting series book.



Matt Coyle

Matt Coyle kicks off his *DARK FISSURES* book tour on Dec. 3rd at Mysterious Galaxy in San Diego. He'll be interviewed on Authors on the Air Dec. 5 at 6:00 pm. Additional appearances will be: Dec. 6, Warwick's-La Jolla, Dec. 8, Poisoned Pen-Scottsdale, Dec. 9, Murder by the Book-Houston, Dec. 10, Book Carnival-Orange, Dec. 12, Book Passage-Corte Madera with **Patricia Smiley** (additional details below).

Patricia Smiley and **Naomi Hirahara** will discuss police procedurals and writing, followed by a book signing on Tuesday, December 6, 7:00 p.m., Vromans Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, CA, (626) 449 5320.

Jacqueline Winspear will introduce **Patricia Smiley** and **Matt Coyle** before their interview and book signing on Monday, December 12, 7:00 p.m. at Book Passage, 51 Tamal Vista Blvd., Corte Madera, CA 94925, (415) 927-0960, (800) 999-7909.

Paul D. Marks will be interviewed on Writer's Block Radio on December 15th at 7pm PST. You can find it here: www.latakradio.com/content/writers-block.



Patricia Smiley discussing *PACIFIC HOMICIDE* at the Crowell Public Library on 11/9.

THE COUNTDOWN TO

2017

CALIFORNIA CRIME WRITERS CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Saturday & Sunday, June 10-11, 2017

www.ccwconference.org





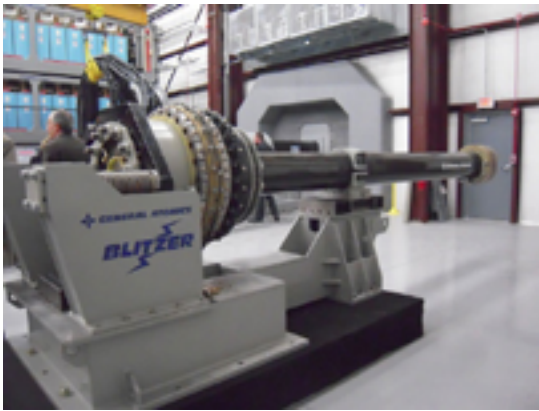
Hollow Points

Gregory Von Dare

Editor's note: This marks the end of **Gregory Von Dare's** "Hollow Points" column for SoCalMWA's *The March of Crime* newsletter. I'd like to personally thank Gregory for his contribution to our chapter and hope to work with him again soon.

On the Rails

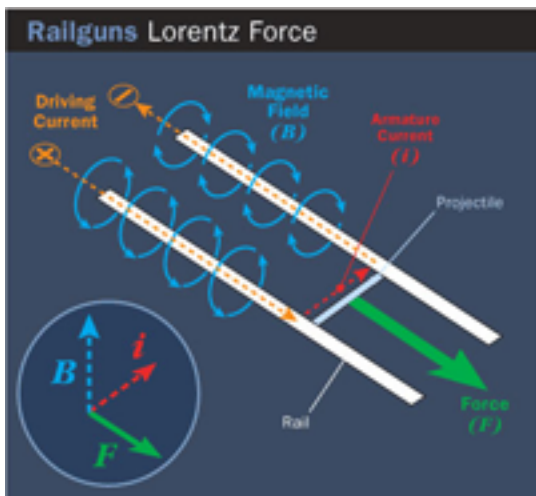
The term is railgun and you probably haven't seen one. This extreme new technology is meant to replace cannons for military use. Instead of pushing an artillery shell forward on a shock wave of hot, rapidly expanding gasses, the railgun flings its projectile out of the barrel using a gigantic burst of electro-magnetic repulsion. Ever try pushing two magnets together? Remember how strongly the like poles resisted? That, basically, is the force behind this gun. However, instead of permanent magnets, the propulsive thrust is created by electricity.



An all-electric 'railgun' cannon was developed for the Navy. It doesn't require the ship to carry high explosives on board.

Each shot requires about the same power as a small city, roughly one million amperes. But it is condensed into a jolt lasting only a few thousandths of a second. With a flash like a strobe light, the railgun's projectile accelerates to Mach 7 (about 5,000 mph) and vanishes over the horizon. This may sound like science fiction, but it's not. Sophisticated prototypes of railguns are field testing today.

While current military railguns are the size of cannons, it's clear that the whole thing could be miniaturized. Inventors around the world are working with this concept, trying to make practical rifles and handguns. When this electronic technology matures, it will transform shooting and bring guns into the 21st century, along with a host of new digital technologies, including dial-a-magnum power controls. Change won't come overnight but it will come.



Magnetic fields combine to fire a railgun projectile.

Inside the barrel of a railgun are two parallel rails of metal—usually copper or aluminum. A metallic projectile fits snugly between the rails and touches both of them, completing a circuit. When the big jolt of electricity travels up one rail, across the projectile and back down the other rail, the two rails develop intense magnetic fields around them that mesh together like two big rotating gears. The projectile creates a third field, but at a 90 degree angle to the rails. Apparently magnetic fields hate this arrangement. The projectile is blasted forward by the Lorentz Force—a super-powerful repulsion.

Unlike the big artillery shells of World War Two, the railgun projectile carries no explosives. It's all about punch. According to Sir Isaac Newton, force equals mass times acceleration. So, even a fairly small object can carry devastating force if you get it moving fast enough. That's what railguns do.

[Continued on pg 9](#)

Meeting Wrap-Up: Truth is Stranger than Fiction

by Terri Nolan

Our November luncheon at the Tam O'Shanter was another informative and educational meeting. Our first guest was Dr. **Cynthia Lea Clark**. She is a SoCalMWA member who works in forensic psychology and is the author of the soon to be published *IN THE MIND OF TERROR*. Nikki Palomino started out in fiction and rock journalism before working on the nonfiction title, *THE LAST GENTLEMAN SMUGGLER*, about pot smuggler Steven M. Kalish. And Caitlin Rother is a New York Times bestselling author and writing/research coach. Her current project is about Charles Manson. All three have impressive resumes in their respective fields and are authors with the belief that nonfiction helps find truth in fiction. Here are the highlights:

How does one transition from fiction to nonfiction?

They use the same techniques. For instance, lots of research is necessary to get inside the head of a character just as it is for a real person. While nonfiction requires the narrative to be true, successful true crime reads like a novel—a balancing act of fact and speculation to keep the tension high.

How is all the research organized?

Every author has their own technique. Cynthia lays it out chronologically. Nikki starts at the end then goes back to the beginning. Caitlin uses a dated timeline to keep the chronology straight, she also outlines to maintain the story arc, themes, and subplots, and organizes chapters.

How much access do you have with your subject?

Direct access is best. But beware. Cynthia's work requires her to interview serial killers. Incarcerated killers woo, charm, and attempt to manipulate interviewers with the hope of getting you to stand up for them during an appeal. But they are expert liars and when their web of lies is called out they usually get vicious. If direct access isn't available, reach out to people who do have it.

What about book proposals?

It's very important to reach out to publishers with the best book proposal possible. They are a selling tool. Do the research to advance the story beyond what has been released by the media. For example: "What can I write about Manson that hasn't been told before?"

How do you get your research materials?

Often the subjects themselves (or those closely associated with them) will have material and photographs; get investigative reports from police departments and district attorneys, trial exhibits and transcripts—some states provide them for free. Keep all research. If the media calls for interviews you'll want to have it handy. Also, keep everything in case you get sued.

When writing a fact-based book is it okay to paraphrase?

No. Try to stick with what's in quotes. It is acceptable to ask the interviewee to re-tell the story and use those quotes.

[Continued on pg 10](#)

A metallic projectile, shaped like a dart and often held in a temporary wrapper called a sabot (pronounced sah-BOW), gets boosted up to Mach 7 and eventually transfers all that energy to its target. It's a devastating blow. In a recent test of a small railgun, the projectile drilled a clean hole through several, one-inch-thick steel plates and kept on going. [Click here](#) for a streaming video of a railgun being tested.

The railgun fires by flooding very large amounts of electrical energy into the gun's rails in a very short time—about ten one-thousandths of a second. This is done by storing electricity in very large scale capacitors. A capacitor is an electronic component that acts like a bucket. You put energy into it and then take it out. Unlike a battery, a capacitor can dump all its energy in a single pulse. The newest railgun uses several giant capacitor banks (the size of shipping-containers) to store electricity. The capacitors may be charged-up by the power grid, batteries, solar panels, or a small nuclear reactor.



This device stores vast amounts of electricity and pumps it into the railgun in an eyeblink.

Similar but different is the coilgun concept. In this variation, one or more magnetic coils are wound around the outside of a metal barrel. This coil receives a flash of electricity and attracts a metallic bullet (usually steel) toward it, accelerating it to high speed. In a typical setup, one or more coils are charged in sequence to fire the projectile. Coilguns seem to be more practical as handguns, since they don't require the overwhelming burst of amperage that railguns need. However, wearing a 150 pound backpack or a belt of beer-can-size capacitors to power your coilgun does not sound like a step forward in weapons design.



The coilgun uses many yards of copper wire, wound into tight coils, to fire a steel bullet.

What can't be tamed is the large amount of electricity discharged with every shot. A pocketful of lightning is a dangerous and volatile thing. Shooting a coilgun on a rainy or foggy night could cause a coronal discharge that shocks the shooter as much as the target. But in time, certain precautions will be second nature, like the gun safety we practice today. Rubber soles anyone?

So you want a coilgun in your holster right away? Right now, you can only have one if you build it yourself. Which seems like a lot of work for something comparable in power to an AirSoft pellet gun, but twice the size and weight of an AK-47. In ten years, the situation will be very different. In fifty years, the railgun and coilgun will be commonplace, and in a hundred years people (if any are left) may look upon gunpowder as we do the slingshot and spear.

Many thanks to SoCalMWA's *The March of Crime* for hosting this column, and for the many positive comments from members. This will be the last entry of "Hollow Points;" we've completed our long and digressive study of firearms. In the Spring of 2017, I'll collect all these columns plus some additional material into an e-book which will be a good reference for mystery, thriller, suspense and espionage writers—and others who are gun-curious. Happy Holidays to all.

Gregory Von Dare comes from Chicago and was raised on crime, corruption and clout in the big city. He has written non-fiction books, magazine articles and radio scripts, as well as stories, plays and screenplays. He once worked as a pyro detonator and talent manager for Universal Studios Hollywood.

Meeting Wrap-Up [continued from pg 9](#)**When interviewing a pathological liar what techniques do you use?**

Don't confront. Let them talk—they will usually bury themselves in their own lies. Keep in mind that they will always claim their innocence. Don't frontload the conversation with opinion. Don't lie or misrepresent yourself. If you let them think they are successfully manipulating you they will slip up with a great nugget of information.

How do you get a prison interview?

There is a vetting process. The best method is to go through their attorney because the prisoner will have to authorize your visit.

And here's one last scary tidbit:

At this time, there are seven serial killers in every state that are actively working. And those are the ones we know of. Creepy.

Prez Rap [continued from pg 2](#)

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the talented writers who volunteered their time and energy to be on the board during the last two years. Without them, nothing would have materialized.

The presidency has been an honor and a privilege and a lot of fun. Thank you. But as our next president has been known to say, I'm not gonna lie: I look forward to having more time to write.

Craig

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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.

Crime
CALENDAR

MORE CRIMINAL HAPPENINGS

December 17 - [SoCalMWA Holiday Party, Los Angeles, CA](#)

See you in 2017!

The
LAST WORD

“That’s what you promised me last time and before we’d even had lunch we’d dug up a body.”

--Jill Amadio, DIGGING UP THE DEAD