

January 2017



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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CALIFORNIA CRIME WRITERS CONFERENCE Saturday, June 10, 2017 – Sunday, June 11, 2017

This is the premier crime writing conference in the country. It is for writers, not fans, and we cap attendance at just 200 people in order to keep it intimate, so it sells out fast. There will be agents, editors, law enforcement/forensics professionals, and panels on craft from some of the best writers in the business.

Keynote Speakers



Best-selling authors

William Kent Krueger
&
Hallie Ephron



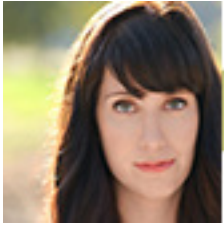
Happy New Year!

from
THE MARCH OF CRIME

[2017 Crime Calendar](#)

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[Register Here](#)



The President's Rap Sheet

Elizabeth Little

Welcome to 2017! We made it!

We have a busy and exciting year ahead of us. I'm pleased to tell you that despite certain recent evidence to the contrary, it is possible for an administrative transition to proceed smoothly: Your chapter leadership is already in the planning stages for several events. As usual, we will be [organizing signings at the Tucson Festival of Books](#) in March and the [Los Angeles Times Festival of Books](#) in April. This June, we will also be co-sponsoring the [California Crime Writers Conference](#) along with our friends in [Sisters in Crime Los Angeles](#). I wish I could take credit for this one—thanks to the incredibly hard work of conference organizers over the past many months, it's shaping up to be a spectacular two days. And for all you Tam O'Shanter faithful, be sure to set aside Sunday, January 29th for our first luncheon of the year. We will be announcing additional programming details soon.

The rest of our calendar will begin to take shape later this month, when our new board meets for the first time and new members **Steph Cha, Sarah M. Chen, and Kristen Kittscher** join returning members **Shannon Baker, Sue Ann Jaffarian, Jessica Kaye, Paul D. Marks, Terri Nolan, Travis Richardson, and James Ziskin**. I cannot emphasize enough how honored and lucky I am to be able to serve with such a dynamic and accomplished group. I'm confident that together we will be able to chart a course for the chapter that will best serve our members and our communities at large.

I hope, though, that you too will share your thoughts with us on scheduling and strategy. In February I intend to send out a survey to our membership so that we may better understand your needs. In the meantime, though, please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to departing board members Eric Beetner and **Matt Coyle**, both of whom have gone above and beyond in their service to the chapter, and to our outgoing president **Craig Faustus Buck**, who has been as dedicated a leader as anyone could ask for.

I wish everyone a very happy and healthy New Year, and I look forward to having the chance to see and speak with you all.

Elizabeth

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Elizabeth Little
VP: TBD
Treasurer: Sarah M. Chen
Secretary: TBD

Board of Directors

Shannon Baker
 Steph Cha
 Sue Ann Jaffarian
 Jessica Kaye
 Kristen Kittscher
 Paul D. Marks
 Terri Nolan
 Travis Richardson
 James Ziskin

President Emeritus:

Craig Faustus Buck

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 Southern California Chapter
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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

If you've been hanging around social media lately, you might've noticed a repeated sentiment: Good riddance, 2016. It seems that 2016 was difficult for many of us, both on a personal and "global" level. While I can't say I'm sorry to say goodbye to 2016, I don't want any of us to lose sight of what we've accomplished this past year. These achievements have been many, and they've been great. It's important to take that with us into 2017 as we look to the future.

I love the new year because it feels like a fresh start. It gives me momentum, but now it's up to me to do the hard work of following through. I have a long list of goals for 2017 that would seem daunting if not for the fact that I break them down into smaller tasks to help keep me on track. No doubt your own To-Do list is just as long and however you choose to tackle it, I wish you a happy and productive year.

With the new year comes a new SoCalMWA board, now led by president Elizabeth Little. There'll be a more comprehensive introduction to our new board in a future issue, but for now I'd like to welcome Liz as our president and to thank her for stepping up.

In this issue of THE MARCH OF CRIME, **Jill Amadio** contributes an [account of her recent visit to a maximum security prison](#), and Craig Faustus Buck delivers a [rundown of the SoCalMWA holiday party](#). My thanks to them both for their contributions.

Holly

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

Editor: [Holly West](#)

January Contributors:
Jill Amadio
Craig Faustus Buck

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

**Join our SoCalMWA
Yahoo! Group**

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

FRESH BLOOD

SoCalMWA welcomes its new and returning members:

Carol S. Tolan
Mikel Wilson



OVER the TRANSOM

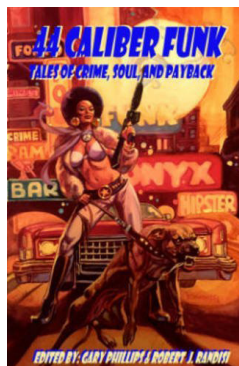
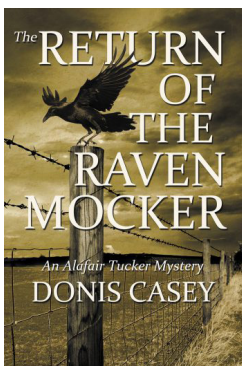
Craig Faustus Buck's flash fiction story “Bunker Mentality” will be featured in the Winter/January 2017 issue of *Flash Bang Mysteries*. Also, his Anthony-finalist short story “Dead End,” the prequel to his novella PSYCHO LOGIC, will be reprinted in the January issue of *Trigger Warnings*, which bills itself as “the lit mag that doesn’t give a shit about your delicate sensibilities.”

DEATH IN TOKYO 1929 by **GayToltl Kinman** is now available. In this mystery short story, an American businesswoman travels to Japan on a buying trip for her exclusive shop in Pasadena, California. Her brother is a friend of President Hoover, who has an unusual request for her. Complying with his request—and surreptitiously conveying items to his courier, Mrs. Wilson, the widow of the former President—puts her in danger.

The Truth is Out There! *X-Files Origins* debuts Jan 3 with two original novels that explore the forces at work in the lives of Fox Mulder and Dana Scully when they were teens. Read Mulder’s story in AGENT OF CHAOS by Kami Garcia and Scully’s origin in DEVIL’S ADVOCATE by **Jonathan Maberry**. From Imprint (Macmillan).

Donis Casey's ninth Alafair Tucker Mystery, THE RETURN OF THE RAVEN MOCKER, has just been released by Poisoned Pen Press. The press is featuring the entire Alafair Tucker series, including the first, THE OLD BUZZARD HAD IT COMING, which is being offered as a free download on iTunes and Amazon in January. THE RETURN OF THE RAVEN MOCKER finds Alafair Tucker fighting her own war as the deadly influenza pandemic of 1918 sweeps like a wildfire through Boynton, Oklahoma. People are falling ill and dying in droves. It’s an overwhelming pandemic. What a perfect time to commit murder. Who’s going to notice? Read the first chapter of THE RETURN OF THE RAVEN MOCKER at www.doniscasey.com.

Travis Richardson had two stories published in December. His story “The Educator” is in 44 CALIBER FUNK, edited by **Gary Phillips** and Robert Randisi. Other SoCalMWA contributors include **Holly West**, **Bob Levinson**, **John Shepphird**, and **Dick Lochte**. Also, Travis’s story “Finding The Answer” is in THE PRISON COMPENDIUM.



OVER the TRANSOM

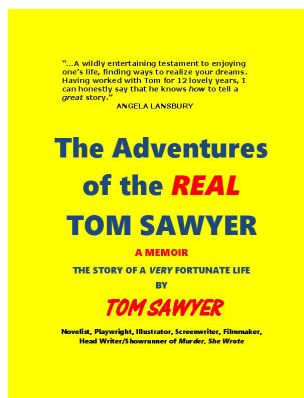
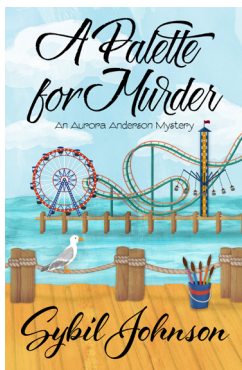
A PALETTE FOR MURDER, the third book in the Aurora Anderson Mystery series by **Sybil Johnson**, will be released Jan 31st.

Martin Roy Hill's sci-fi military mystery, "Soldiers Gone," appears in the latest (December 18) issue of *Nebula Rift*. In the not-so-distant future, an Air Force pilot wonders why so many of his friends have disappeared in a war in which no one is supposed to die.

Tom Sawyer's autobiography, THE ADVENTURES OF THE REAL TOM SAWYER, will be released in January or February by BearManor Media. Paul Levine, bestselling author of BUM RAP says, "[Tom Sawyer] has an insider's knowledge of the business that will appeal to aspiring Hollywood writers and fans alike. A bravura memoir!"

V.C. Andrews/**Andrew Neiderman** follows up THE MIRROR SISTERS (December 2016) with its sequel, BROKEN GLASS (2/28/17). Andrew has been writing V.C. Andrews for over 30 years now and has brought the total worldwide books from 30 million to over 107, with the latest country acquisition of a V.C. title to be mainland China. Andrew has written the stage play for *Flowers in the Attic* for Martian Entertainment, a Broadway production entity that will seek to produce it in 2017. He is consulting producer for the fifth straight Lifetime V.C. Andrews adaptation, *Heaven*, prospectively aired in 2017.

Level Best Books' anthology, BUSTED! ARRESTING STORIES FROM THE BEAT, will include the crime-horror police story "Most Evil" by **Peter DiChellis**. Acceptances were announced in December; the anthology will be released in April. Also in December, ezine *Over My Dead Body!* published Peter's humorous "You-Solve-It" mini-mystery "The Pinnacle Diner Murder."



Member APPEARANCES

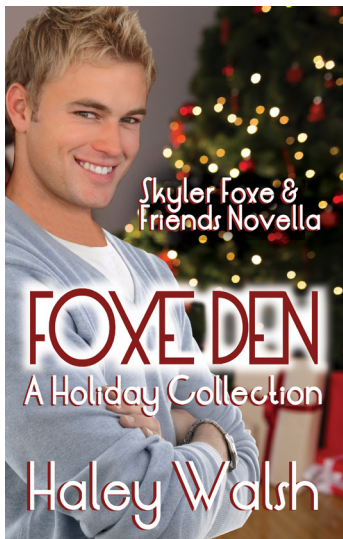
Mystery on the Menu: A luncheon with 15 best-selling mystery authors: **Jill Amadio, Connie Archer/Connie Di Marco, Mike Befeler, Marcia Clark, Dianne Emley, Betty Hechtman, Naomi Hirahara, Linda O. Johnston, Karen Keskinen, DP Lyle, Christopher J. Lynch, Paul D. Marks, David Putnam, Nancy Cole Silverman, and Patty Smiley.** Saturday, January 28, 2017, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Cerritos Library, 18025 Bloomberg Avenue, Cerritos CA 90703. Admission is \$50 per person. Register early, as seating is limited. Contact Janice Dawson at (562) 924-2474 for more information.

Patricia Smiley will discuss *PACIFIC HOMICIDE* at BOOK'd: The Ultimate Bibliopiles' Night Out, Thursday, February 2, 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at The Group Repertory/Lonny Chapman Theatre, 10900 Burbank Boulevard, N. Hollywood CA 9160. Presentation and book giveaway. For tickets, please visit www.bookdevent.com.

S. A. Stolinsky, author of *HOT SHOT*, will be greeting customers and signing her book at Vroman's Bookstore on March 12, Sunday at 4 p.m. in Pasadena, CA. Please join us. Refreshments.



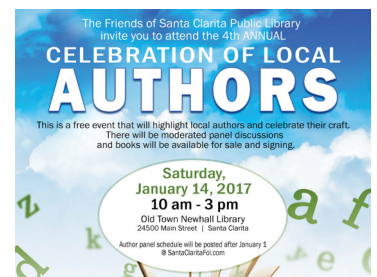
Matt Coyle (*DARK FISSURES*) and Patricia Smiley (*PACIFIC HOMICIDE*) discuss their new books with Jacqueline Winspear at Book Passage in Corte Madera, CA on December 12, 2016.



Jeri Westerson—speaking as her alter-ego Haley Walsh, who writes the Skyler Foxe LGBT Mysteries—will be interviewed along with her audiobook narrator Joel Leslie on the Big Gay Fiction Podcast sometime in January. Her tenth Skyler Foxe Mystery, *STONE COLD FOXE*, will be available in early spring. Haley's holiday novella *FOXEN DEN* was reviewed on this episode of the show: <http://www.jeffandwill.com/big-gay-fiction-podcast/2016/12/19/big-gay-fiction-podcast-episode-63-big-book-review-show-featuring-jay-from-joyfully-jay-more/>.

Kim Fay will be interviewing award-winning author Terry Shames on Saturday, January 14 at 2 pm at Book Carnival (Anne's Bookends), 348 S. Tustin St. Orange, CA. The two will be discussing the latest in Shames' series, *AN UNSETTLING CRIME FOR SAMUEL CRADDOCK*, a prequel to the popular Samuel Craddock police procedural mysteries.

Ellen Byron and **Paul D. Marks** will be appearing at the Friends of the Santa Clarita Public Library Celebration of Local Authors, on January 14th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Celebration is located at the Old Towne Newhall Library, 24500 Main Street, Santa Clarita.



THE COUNTDOWN TO

2017

CALIFORNIA CRIME WRITERS CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Saturday & Sunday, June 10-11, 2017

www.ccwconference.org



A Visit to a Maximum Security Prison

by Jill Amadio

There was no turning back. I had agreed and that was that. Too late to panic. Fellow author Christopher J. Lynch, who writes the One-Eyed Jack crime novels, teaches a creative writing class to criminals at a maximum security prison and invited me to accompany him one weekend early last month.

Research can take you through some interesting experiences but this time I wasn't seeking information. I was going to the prison to conduct a class in writing memoirs. I've ghostwritten 13 books and Chris figured I could talk about writing memoirs, although the killers know they will never publish books about their crimes due to the stringent rule against profiting from their criminal actions.

As we approached the massive spread of the California state maximum security prison outside Lancaster, 90 miles north of Los Angeles, I felt flutterings of regret. I'd only faced a murderer once before, over coffee in idyllic Laguna Beach, and that was prior to even knowing he was one – he wanted to hire me to ghostwrite his story. We only had one meeting. Four months later he'd been convicted and sentenced to life in prison for murder. Bet he was glad he hadn't yet paid me a fee.

Today, there'd be sixteen convicted killers sitting in front of me in a cramped prison classroom. Would armed guards be stationed at the door? My stomach clenched at the possibility of insulting catcalls and whistles flung my way.

Upon admission there were strict rules to be observed by visitors. No wire underbras (darn, gravity was fast claiming my bosom). No blue or green clothing. No wallets. No handbags. No bags. Not even a lipstick! In fact, one walks into the prison, home to hundreds of male lifers who are locked up till they die, feeling practically naked. I wasn't even permitted to bring in pen and paper.

Built in 1977 and set in a pastoral valley between a brooding mountain range and desert scrub on the edge of the Mojave Desert that stretches to the horizon, the California State Prison has a population of almost 1,000 inmates. It was cited in 2002 for "horrible conditions" that led to riots and melees. Fourteen years later, thankfully, there's an almost total remake of the recreational yards with basketball hoops and baseball diamonds. I'm blown away by the outwardly relaxed atmosphere and the relationship between prisoners and correctional officers. I feel a lot safer. It's Saturday and visiting day. Guess no one wants to mess that up.

We go through three checkpoints where our driver's licenses are scrutinized each time before we are allowed into A Yard, a spacious recreational and classroom area where Honor Roll prisoners have earned the right to enjoy its amenities by renouncing violence and drugs. Finally, we are shown into the classroom. Next door electric bass guitar practice sends thumps through the wall, and down the corridor is a Bible college class.

The inmates in my classroom are already seated and greet me with smiles. I smile back and shake hands with a few as they tell me their names, Native American Kicking Horse among them. There's a former bodyguard to Hustler magazine founder Larry Flynt, and a decorated U.S. Army Vietnam vet who earned two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. I tell them how clean and well-groomed they look in their freshly pressed blue cotton V-necked tops and jeans. Then I read the large yellow initials on the back of each shirt: CDCR—California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Kicking Horse sports a grey-haired plait down his back and a straw cowboy hat on his head. Around his neck is a beaded necklace and pendant declaring he is a member of the Choctaw tribe.

[Continued on pg 9](#)

[continued from pg 8](#)

Another guy's black hair stands up in three-inch spikes, and he turns out to be a superb, polished writer of prose and poetry. I realize I am addressing an attentive group of smiling gentlemen who are serious about writing. Some have already published essays and books. Most are in their late 30s and 40s, a few older than that. Most have already spent more than 20 years incarcerated and, now matured, can look forward to only decades more in prison.

After my two-hour spiel about how to write their autobiographies and memoirs (I've written 14) and admonishing them, perhaps naively, to always tell the truth in their writing, I listen to them read the writing assignment Christopher had given them and would post on his website and Facebook page: Write a piece from the point of view of a correctional officer. A few went off the tracks and a couple were difficult to listen to. One related the story of an officer enjoying time at home in his back garden with his family. As he read, the writer choked up for a moment, obviously comparing his current situation to the guard's life.

After the class I am given a tour of a two-tiered facility where the lock-ups are called housing units rather than cell blocks. I'm a bit unnerved by the prominent signs in large block capitals: "WARNING. NO WARNING SHOTS FIRED."

Christopher and a guard take me to the dog rehab area where inmates train some of the animals as therapy dogs or prepare them for adoption. It's one of the many activities the prisoners can enjoy, including classes to graduate high school and college.

There are no bars on the 6ft. x 9ft. cells that are each home to two prisoners. The bars have been replaced by heavy sliding steel doors, albeit with a tiny window facing an open indoor seating area and the observation tower manned by armed guards. I am treated to the ear-splitting *clang!* the heavy doors make when closing. Just like in the movies.

A slit of a narrow window in the exterior cell wall allows prisoners to look outside. The view is a close-up of a 20-ft. wall topped with thick coils of concertina razor wire first used, I learned, in World War I. The only way the incarcerated men can tell the time in their cells is by the heat from the sun as it moves across the Southern California sky.

Finally, we bid everyone goodbye and thank the guards. We're both silent as we drive south back to Los Angeles. What is there to say? At the end of it all, the inmates each took someone's life.



Jill Amadio is an author, collaborator, ghostwriter and journalist. Her latest book, *DIGGING UP THE DEAD*, is the second in the Tosca Trevant mystery series, featuring a grumpy Cornishwoman banished to California who begins to solve murders to earn her way back to her beloved Cornwall and her job in London. Learn more at jillamadiomysteries.com.

You Oughta Be in Pictures

SoCalMWA Holiday Party

More than 100 chapter members made the scene to our annual holiday party at the secret speakeasy Chloe's, hidden behind the bar of the Golden Road Brewery pub. The highlight of the evening was the socializing, but the artisanal ales and fine wines greased the wheels.

Before dinner, we enjoyed passed appetizers of Chinese quesadillas, tomato bruschetta, prosciutto-wrapped melon, wild mushroom fritters and cheeses, and fresh fruits. Then a dinner buffet of Caesar salad, cranberry almond goat-cheese salad, roasted potatoes, balsamic roasted veggies, braised short ribs, roasted chicken breast, and vegetarian lasagna. We topped it all off with bread pudding, brownies, and lemon bars. A splendid time was had by all. (Text by **Craig Faustus Buck**, photos by Richard Michael Johnson)



L - R: Sue Ann Jaffarian, Elizabeth Little, and Gary Phillips



Maxine Nunes



Giant jenga with (L-R) Lissa Price, Nadine Nettmann, and Matthew Semerau



A conversation including (L - R) Phoebe Sutton, Robert Ward, and Brett Battles

Crime CALENDAR

Tucson Festival of Books

Showcase your work to the more than 130,000 readers who will be attending the 2017 Tucson Festival of Books!

Come sign at the SoCalMWA table! Signings will take place at the University of Arizona, March 11-12, from 9:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Interested members should contact Fred Andersen at fxandersen@msn.com.

MORE CRIMINAL HAPPENINGS

January 29 - [SoCalMWA Tam Luncheon \(topic TBA\), Los Angeles, CA](#)
February 23-26 - [SleuthFest, Boca Raton, FL](#)
March 11-12 - [Tucson Festival of Books, Tucson, AZ](#)
March 16-19 - [Left Coast Crime, Honolulu, HI](#)
April 28-30 - [Malice Domestic, Bethesda, MD](#)
June 10-11 - [California Crime Writers Conference, Culver City, CA](#)
October 12-15 - [Bouchercon World Mystery Conference, Toronto, Canada](#)

More dates to come!

The LAST WORD

“He’d seen enough of death, but apparently, death hadn’t seen enough of him.”

—Ed Kovacs, LOCKED DOWN