



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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Aloha!

Going to Left Coast Crime in Honolulu? Start the conference off right by joining SoCalMWA for a **chapter-sponsored happy hour** at the Hilton Hawaiian Village's Tapa Bar on **Wednesday, March 15, from 5-6:30pm**. First drink free for members. Order a Blue Hawaii, invented by Hilton Hawaiian Village bartender Harry Yee in 1957! If you have any questions, please [email Sarah Chen](#).

April 22—23, 2017

USC Campus

Free Admission

Los Angeles Times
**FESTIVAL
OF BOOKS**
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Save the Date!

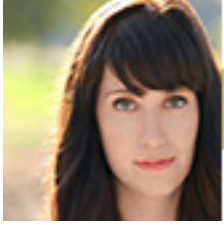
Sunday, May 21

SoCalMWA
Luncheon at the Tam
(program TBD)

[Updated Crime Calendar](#)

Sign-Ups Open Soon!

SoCalMWA will have a table at the **Los Angeles Times Festival of Books**. Keep an eye out for an upcoming mailing announcing that sign-ups are open.



The President's Rap Sheet

Elizabeth Little

This fall, I threw out an 80,000-word manuscript. It still hurts to say that.

I'd been working on what was supposed to have been my fourth book for over a year at that point—which, coincidentally, is also how long I'd known the book was DOA. It pains me to admit it, but this book was broken from the start: It was a story I didn't particularly enjoy, told by a character I didn't particularly like. I was writing for the market, I now realize; I wasn't writing for myself.

For fifteen months, though, I feigned enthusiasm, telling my editor and agent that I was making progress! Figuring things out! Breaking new ground! Kate Atkinson, watch your back!

But in truth the book was getting worse and worse. Something was missing, and I couldn't figure out what, so I threw cheap plot tricks at the problem instead. By the time I called it quits, the book had five twists, three love triangles, and two narrators, one of them dead. Many shades of lipstick on one very ugly pig.

Then, one day, I came to my senses and threw the thing away. My friends were horrified. My husband was appalled. My agent was ... suspiciously relieved.

I'm now well into my second fourth book, and this time I mean it when I say I'm making progress. I mean, yes, of course, I definitely feel like the slowest, slovenliest writer in the Western Hemisphere, and I die a little every time I have to reveal how long it's been since my last book came out. But for the first time in ages I'm writing something I believe in, and I can see the difference on the page. Sure, it might have taken me a long time to get here, but I can say unequivocally that it was worth it.

That said, I wouldn't wish the past eighteen months on anybody, so if you, like me, have been struggling with a project, learn from my mistakes: Don't try to tell yourself something is working even when it isn't, and don't be afraid to change course. Starting over isn't giving up.

I won't lie, I still have moments when I wish I'd pushed through. After all, if I had, I'd probably be in copyediting now—maybe I'd even have galleys to pass around. On the other hand, if I'd pushed through I never would have had a day like today, when the right words to a story I love seemed to appear on the page of their own volition, and the sun was shining and my cat was purring and I got to say to myself, with perfect confidence and joy, *Thank God I'm not still writing that dumb book about that stupid freaking cult.*

Elizabeth

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

Maybe this is an odd place for a Mary Tyler Moore tribute, but let me explain. I've been an unabashed fan of the late Ms. Tyler Moore since I was a child, when *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* aired on Saturday nights. I was too young to appreciate just how ground-breaking the program was at the time, but even then I knew that Mary herself was something special.

In the 1990s, I came to love *The Dick Van Dyke Show* through reruns on TV Land, and there was Mary, the charming example of a perfect wife to a perfect husband. Perhaps you know this bit of backstory to *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*—producers planned for Mary Richards to be a divorcée, but concerned that viewers might conflate the new character with Laura Petrie divorcing Rob, they decided her move to Minneapolis was due to the recent break-up of a long-term relationship instead.

Throughout my life, I've had what can only be described as a girl crush on Mary Tyler Moore. Personality-wise, I'm much more of a Rhoda than a Mary, but Mary—she's my girl. So when the news came on January 25 that Mary Tyler Moore had passed away at age 80, I was heartbroken.

At this point, you're probably asking yourself what all this has to do with *The March of Crime*. Here it is: As I edit your newsletter every month, I often have *The Dick Van Dyke Show* playing on Netflix in the background. In fact, I'm watching it right now, and ironically, the episode is about Rob and Laura's families arguing over competing burial plots. Mary, as Laura Petrie, is so beautiful and vibrant I can hardly believe she's gone.

But as time marches on without Mary, so too will SoCalMWA and *The March of Crime*. This month's issue features an introduction to our [2017 board](#). Thank you all for your service—we look forward to a productive and fun year.

Holly

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

Editor: [Holly West](#)

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@yahoo.com to join
(members only)

FRESH BLOOD

SoCalMWA welcomes its new and returning members:

Dianne Dixon
Janet Penn
Sarah Skilton
Josh Stallings
Kate Thornton
Carl Vonderau



OVER the TRANSOM

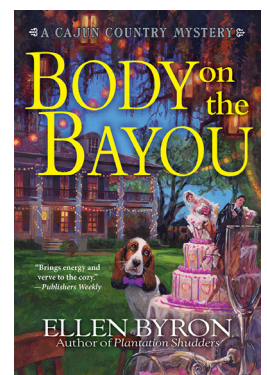
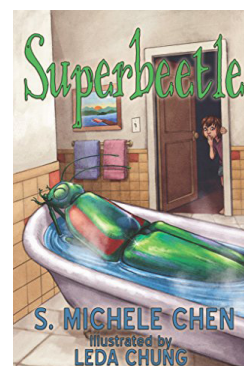
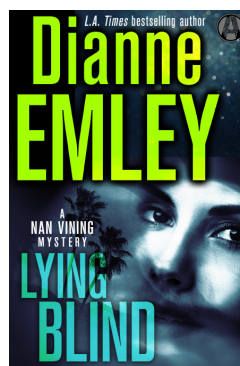
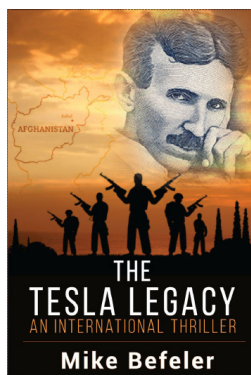
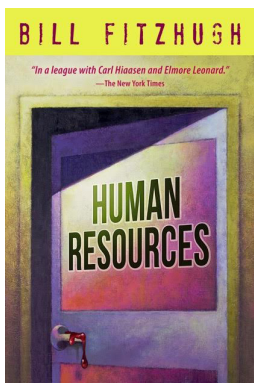
Lefty Award winner **Bill Fitzhugh** has released his tenth novel. Set in the world of organ transplants, **HUMAN RESOURCES** is a comic thriller featuring organ acquisition specialist Jake Trapper. After a potential organ donor is killed (and has his eyes taken to boot), Jake meets Detective Megan Densmore, LAPD Homicide, and together they strike out to find who killed the man and why they took his eyes. Also, there is a botched monkey kidnapping in there somewhere. Paul Levine, author of **BUM RAP**, says **HUMAN RESOURCES** is a “humdinger, a darkly comic gem.”

Mike Befeler's latest novel, **THE TESLA LEGACY**, an international thriller, was published in February 2017. When retired professor and conspiracy nut Elmore Kranz bombards the police with his predictions of disaster and one of them actually happens, he's implicated in the plot. Even with the assistance of his one ally, rookie cop Brittney Chase, people start dying around Elmore and attempts are made on his life. Following up on inventions from eccentric genius Nikola Tesla, Elmore and Brittney team up to solve a hundred-year-old puzzle while trying to thwart a secret government agency and an Afghani terrorist group who seek to get their hands on a doomsday weapon.

Homicide detective Nan Vining finds her world rocked when a murder investigation becomes chillingly personal in **LYING BLIND**, the sixth in **Dianne Emley's** *Los Angeles Times*—bestselling Nan Vining series, published by Alibi/Random House on February 28, 2017 in a digital-first edition.

Sarah M. Chen's first children's chapter book, **SUPERBEETLE**, will be released March 11, 2017 by Gen-E Books, a children's imprint of Elm Books. It features an eight-year-old girl named Hong who travels to Taiwan for the first time to meet her grandmother. It's about family, Chinese culture, and bugs. Sarah wrote it under her pen name, S. Michele Chen, and illustrations are by Leda Chung. Perfect for readers ages 6-9. <http://superbeetlebook.com>.

Ellen Byron is thrilled that her latest Cajun Country Mystery, **BODY ON THE BAYOU**, is nominated for both a Most Humorous Lefty and a Best Contemporary Novel Agatha. It never would have happened without the support and encouragement of SoCalMWA. Her husband and daughter are not thrilled that she's going to Hawaii without them.



OVER the TRANSOM

COAST TO COAST: PRIVATE EYES FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA, from Down & Out Books, edited by Andrew McAleer and **Paul D. Marks**, dropped on January 30th. A great collection of P.I. stories from some terrific writers: J.L. Abramo, Eric Beetner, Michael Bracken, Meredith Cole, **Matt Coyle**, O'Neil De Noux, Thomas Donahue, John Floyd, **Gay Toltl Kinman**, Terrill Lee Lankford, Janice Law Trecker, Andrew McAleer, **Paul D. Marks**, Robert Randisi, and Art Taylor.

Serita Stevens's *Murder Me Twice*—a psychological thriller script—was recently optioned by the Nassar Entertainment Group. When her car stalls in a small Southern town, Andrea begins having nightmares of being raped and murdered—but as a black girl thirty years before. Her investigation proves the murder case had never been solved, and her questions put her in danger as she confronts the Klan and the racist town. She must find the killer before he murders her ... again.

Martin Roy Hill's short story, "The Veteran," appeared in the February issue of *Mystery Weekly Magazine*. A serial killer is stalking street vagrants. Homeless Vietnam veteran Craggs is determined to face death the way he did in the jungle—alone.

Pat H. Broeske (a biographer-journalist) has sold her first short story. "The Fast and the Furriest," featuring Hollywood "fixer" Casey Cummings, former Blaxploitation star Bad Bobby Baron, and a pack of chihuahuas, will appear in an upcoming issue of *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*.

Gay Toltl Kinman has two new short stories on Kindle: "Burt" is the sixth and last story in the Stand-Down series of P.I. short stories, in which Char, a paraplegic Army vet, works on a case for the PI Agency involving stolen explosives. She and Burt, the bus driver, thwart a terrorist from buying stolen explosives—and he wants revenge. "Obituary!" is a children's suspense story included in an R.L. Stine anthology. Wheelchair-bound Stace Redcliff, bullied by neighbor and classmate Jeremy V. Zoe, has a Halloween party where revenge is wrought on Jeremy by—something.

Now Accepting Submissions

[Southern California Writer's Association \(SCWA\)](#) is accepting submissions for IT'S ALL IN THE STORY, a collection of exceptional short stories with a focus on California. Guided by bestselling author **D.P. Lyle**, the anthology is intended to bring recognition to writers who can tell a great story about or set in California.

[Click here for details](#)

Member
APPEARANCES



Travis Richardson and Glen Erik

Hamilton will be reading at Noir at the Bar on March 5 at the Mandrake Bar, 2692 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles, 90034 at 8pm.

Jeri Westerson's alter ego Haley Walsh, who writes the Skyler Foxe LGBT Mysteries, will be featured in an interview on the Big Gay Fiction Podcast on March 6, along with her audiobook narrator, Joel Leslie. Find out more at <http://www.jeffandwill.com/biggayfictionpodcast/>.

On March 19, **Sheila Lowe** will be part of a panel with several other SinC members at the Anaheim Public Library Author Luncheon. As a graduate of Anaheim High School Class of '67, Sheila is looking forward to a visit to her old stomping grounds. She'll also be working for Adobe in Las Vegas March 20—24, analyzing handwriting and handing out bookmarks for her Forensic Handwriting Mystery series.

Jennifer Moss is combining her love of teaching with her love of nature in her new venture, Yosemite Writing Retreats. She has partnered with the historic Sierra Sky Ranch to offer all-inclusive writing workshop weekends for both new and established writers. Jennifer has been teaching fiction writing to both teens and adults for five years, while also writing her own mystery series with a “metaphysical twist.” For more information and to view 2017 dates visit YosemiteWritingRetreat.com.

Joel Fox will be on two panels at Left Coast Crime in Honolulu. “Criminal Justice: The FBI & the Real Five-O” on Friday, March 17 at 1:45 p.m. and, as moderator, “Creating Characters Beyond an Author’s Culture” on Sunday, March 19 at 9:00 a.m.

Patricia Smiley will be participating in two panels at Left Coast Crime in Honolulu: “Specialized Police Work: A Different Kind of Cop” on Friday, March 17 at 3:00 p.m. and “Police Procedurals: ‘You have the right to remain silent...’” on Saturday, March 18 at 10:30 a.m.

Meet SoCalMWA's 2017 Board



PRESIDENT - Elizabeth Little

Elizabeth has written for the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, among other publications, and is the author of two works of narrative nonfiction, *BITING THE WAX TADPOLE: CONFESSIONS OF A LANGUAGE FANATIC* and *TRIP OF THE TONGUE: CROSS COUNTRY TRAVELS IN SEARCH OF AMERICA'S LANGUAGES*. *DEAR DAUGHTER*, her *Los Angeles Times*—bestselling debut novel, was nominated for the Barry and Macavity Awards for Best First Novel, longlisted for the CWA John Creasey Dagger, and won the Strand Critics Award for Best First Novel. One day she will finally finish her second novel—she hopes.

VICE PRESIDENT - Paul D. Marks

Paul is the author of the Shamus Award—winning mystery-thriller *WHITE HEAT*. *Publishers Weekly* calls it a “taut crime yarn.” His story “Howling at the Moon” (EQMM 11/14) was short-listed for both the 2015 Anthony and Macavity Awards for Best Short Story and came in #7 in Ellery Queen’s Reader’s Poll Award. *Midwest Review* calls *VORTEX*, Paul’s noir novella, “...a nonstop staccato action noir.” His story “Deserted Cities of the Heart” appears in Akashic’s *ST. LOUIS NOIR* and “Ghosts of Bunker Hill” is in the December, 2016 *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. pauldmarks.com.



TREASURER - Sarah M. Chen

Sarah juggles several jobs including indie bookseller, transcriber, and insurance adjuster. She has published over twenty crime fiction short stories with *Shotgun Honey*, *Crime Factory*, *Betty Fedora*, *Out of the Gutter*, and *Dead Guns Press*, among others. *CLEANING UP FINN*, her noir novella with All Due Respect Books, is a 2017 Lefty Award finalist for Best Debut Mystery. sarahmchen.com.

Secretary - Travis Richardson

Travis has been a finalist for the Macavity, Anthony, and Derringer short story awards. His novella *LOST IN CLOVER* was listed in *Spinetingler Magazine's* Best Crime Fiction of 2012. His second novella, *KEEPING THE RECORD*, came out in 2014. He has published stories in crime fiction publications such as *Thuglit*, *Shotgun Honey*, *Flash Fiction Offensive*, and *All Due Respect*. He used to edit the SinC/LA newsletter Ransom Notes and reviewed Anton Chekhov short stories at www.chekhovshorts.com. Currently he is trying to read 1000 short stories this year at #1000storychallenge. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and daughter. tsrichardson.com.



Shannon Baker is the author of *STRIPPED BARE*, the first in the Kate Fox mystery series (Tor/Forge). Set in the isolated cattle country of the Nebraska Sandhills, it's been called *Longmire* meets *The Good Wife*. She also writes the Nora Abbott mystery series (Midnight Ink), a fast-paced mix of Hopi Indian mysticism, environmental issues, and murder set in western landscapes. Shannon was voted Rocky Mountain Fiction Writer's 2014 Writer of the Year and makes her home in Tucson where she enjoys cocktails by the pool, breathtaking sunsets, a crazy Weimaraner, and killing people (in the pages of her books). shannon-baker.com

Meet SoCalMWA's 2017 Board



Steph Cha is the author of *FOLLOW HER HOME*, *BEWARE BEWARE*, and *DEAD SOON ENOUGH*. She's the noir editor for the *Los Angeles Review of Books* and a regular contributor to the *Los Angeles Times* and *USA Today*. She lives in her native city of Los Angeles with her husband and two basset hounds.

Sue Ann Jaffarian is the author of three critically acclaimed mystery series: The Odelia Grey series, the Ghost of Granny Apples series, and the Madison Rose Vampire Mysteries. She also writes the Winnie Wilde romance series, as well as short stories. In addition to writing, Sue Ann is a full-time paralegal living in Los Angeles. *Kirkus* has said of Sue Ann, "Like Stuart Kaminsky, Jaffarian juggles her franchises deftly, giving each a unique voice and appeal." Visit her at sueannjaffarian.com or on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).



Jessica Kaye is an entertainment and publishing attorney and a Grammy Award—winning audiobook producer. In addition to SoCalMWA, she serves on the boards of the Audio Publishers Association and The Victory Theatre Center in Burbank. Jessica owns [Big Happy Family](#), LLC, an audiobook distributor. She created and co-edited the anthology *MEETING ACROSS THE RIVER* (Bloomsbury USA, 2005) and contributed a story to *OCCUPIED EARTH* (Polis Books, 2015).

Kristen Kittscher is a former middle school teacher and author of mysteries for young readers. Her Hitchcock-inspired debut novel, *THE WIG IN THE WINDOW*, garnered a starred review from *School Library Journal* and was named to ten Best of the Year lists. She lives with her husband, Kai, in Pasadena, home of the Rose Parade—the inspiration for her most recent Young & Yang mystery, *THE TIARA ON THE TERRACE*. This year she's looking forward to traveling to North Carolina as JKS Communications's Writer in Residence, an honor she's sharing with MWA Midwest Chapter President Lori Rader-Day.



Terri Nolan has been a member of MWA for ten years and considers service to be important: "I believe in giving back to the organizations from which I receive so much." This year marks her fifth on the executive board. She is the author of three thrillers and a short story featuring investigative journalist Birdie Keane. The critically acclaimed and award-nominated trilogy includes the novels *BURDEN OF TRUTH*, *GLASS HOUSES*, and *BLUE BIRD*. Birdie made her literary debut in the short story "Hobo Joe." Terri lives in Orange County and is currently working on narrative nonfiction. Terrinolan.com.



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



Bestselling authors

William Kent Krueger
&
Hallie Ephron



[More Information](#)

[Register Here](#)

2017 Edgar Week Activities

Tuesday, April 25

Come celebrate the 2017 Edgar Awards at the Mysterious Bookshop, Tuesday, April 25 at 6:00pm. Join us for a thrilling evening featuring members of Mystery Writers of America, the 2017 Edgar Award nominees, bestselling authors, and publisher representatives. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet some of the best and brightest in the mystery world!

Mysterious Bookshop
58 Warren Street
New York, NY
6:00—8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 26

Edgar Week Symposium
Grand Hyatt Hotel—Conference Level (Room TBD)
East 42nd St. at Grand Central Station
8:30 a.m.—4:50 p.m.

[Click here for more information and to register.](#)

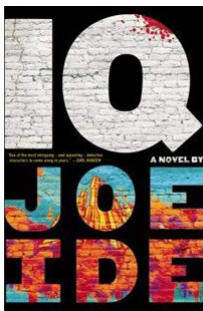
Thursday, April 27

2017 Edgar Awards Banquet
Grand Hyatt Hotel—Ballroom Level
East 42nd St. at Grand Central Station
6:30 p.m. Cocktails
7:30 p.m. Dinner, followed by awards program

Tickets are \$195 per person

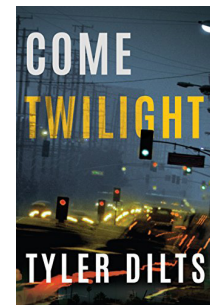
[Click here for more information and to purchase tickets.](#)

SoCalMWA congratulates our members who are nominated for 2017 Edgar Awards:



Best First Novel
IQ by **Joe Ide**

Best Paperback Original
COME TWILIGHT by **Tyler Dilts**



Southern California Writers Association Anthology

IT'S ALL IN THE STORY



SCWA's *It's All in the Story* is a collection of exceptional short stories with a focus on California. Guided by bestselling author Doug Lyle, the anthology is intended to bring recognition to writers who can tell a great story about or set in California. Whether your main character is a Southern California surfer, your protagonist's heroics take place on a Northern California freeway, or your story unfolds after an earthquake in the Central Valley, we are looking for short stories that incorporate California in some way.

The SCWA Anthology is conceived as a broad-based literary publication open to all writers. The book will showcase California with the goal of exhibiting the best writers have to offer. Whether you are a current or future published author, this may be your chance to be part of a professionally produced, nationally distributed book that you can use in your portfolio. Agents and publishers are always on the lookout for a portfolio of work and a platform to distinguish writers. You never know, this anthology may help you get your own book deal.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- 1 Submit an original fictional short story between 1,500 and 3,000 words in a Word file. The story must be previously unpublished. You may submit more than one entry, but each entry will require a separate entry fee:
 - SCWA member: \$25
 - Non-SCWA member: \$55, which includes a one-year membership in SCWA
- 2 An editorial review committee will review all submissions. Please make sure your entry is edited and polished. If your story is accepted, you will be invited to participate in the publication of the book. The book will be approximately 200 pages, 6 x 9 trade paperback, and it will be available via bookstores, Amazon, and other online bookstores. An e-book version will also be available.
- 3 You will retain the copyright to your story.
- 4 **Deadlines:**
 - 4/15/17 submissions due
 - 5/22/17 authors of stories selected for publication notified
 - 10/1/17 publication date
- 5 Please send submissions with your name, day and night phone numbers, e-mail address, and method of payment to our submissions editor, Don Westenhaver, at donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com. Don will e-mail you an invoice for the amount of the fee (\$25 or \$55). The invoice will state the method of payment you have chosen. If by check, the invoice will instruct you where to mail the check, payable to SCWA. If by credit card, it will instruct you how to pay via the Squareup.com website.

Meeting Wrap-Up: Arson Investigations

by Jill Amadio

Arson investigations are among the most intensive for special agents of the Alcohol, Tobacco, Fire and Explosives Bureau. Meticulous attention to sifting through the messy aftermath of a fire is paramount. At the January meeting of SoCalMWA, three ATF agents, Michael Hidalgo, Sam Chung, and James Kumura, explained the ins and outs of investigating a fire. In addition, LAFD investigator and canine handler Gus Gaeta brought along his certified detective hound, Blue, to demonstrate the K-9's talent for finding evidence of arson by laying clues beneath our luncheon tables.

During a fascinating two and a half hours, the agents explained that the three factors that must be present to prove that a fire was arson include the presence of oxygen, a fuel source, and heat. Oxygen can be introduced by opening windows and doors; fuel sources include kerosene, alcohol, or gasoline; and matches, explosives, or chemicals can provide the heat. Finding out where the fire began, how it happened, and drawing conclusions from the evidence are all part of the ATF's job.

For crime writers, understanding an arsonist as character, along with their motives, can involve in-depth research, not the least of which, as ATF agent James Kumura explained, is a lengthy series of red flags he looks for when investigating the suspected perpetrators. Most indicators involve financial difficulties such as overdue bills and delinquent loans, decreasing income or revenue, increased borrowing, and bankruptcy proceedings.

If the arsonist owns a company, ATF agents look at litigation against him, costly rent increases, the use of personal money to pay company expenses, and the reverse – company money used to pay personal expenses. Kumura checks out sales of key assets, a change in spending patterns, a loss of key company customers, and all company bills paid by credit card.

Overdue bills and failure to repay loans are red flags, as are losses over the prior year. Gambling debts, drug use, alcoholism, and divorce can all point to desperation and lead to arson. Great character traits!

Crime CALENDAR

March 5—[Noir at the Bar, Culver City, CA](#)
March 11—12—[Tucson Festival of Books, Tucson, AZ](#)
March 16—19—[Left Coast Crime, Honolulu, HI](#)
April 22—23—[Los Angeles Times Festival of Books, Los Angeles, CA](#)
April 28—30—[Malice Domestic, Bethesda, MD](#)
May 21—[SoCalMWA Tam Luncheon \(program TBD\), Los Angeles, CA](#)
June 10—11—[California Crime Writers Conference, Culver City, CA](#)
July 11—15—[ThrillerFest XII, New York, NY](#)
October 7—[SoCalMWA Gumbo Party, Los Angeles, CA](#)
October 12—15—[Bouchercon World Mystery Conference, Toronto, Canada](#)
December 10—[SoCalMWA Holiday Party, Los Angeles, CA](#)

More dates to come!

The LAST WORD

“The barbeque was in a trailer park, and not the good one either. The Hancock Arms had a reputation for dropouts, ex-cons, the unemployed, and people who couldn’t seem to scrape bad luck off their shoe.”

—Travis Richardson, LOST IN CLOVER