

September 2017



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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Mystery Writers of America

“Writing Commercial Fiction”

with Jeffery Deaver

Presented by SoCalMWA



MWA University returns to Southern California for a special MWA-U master class led by bestselling author Jeffery Deaver.

SPACES STILL AVAILABLE!

Join SoCalMWA on **September 16** for a special MWA-U master class led by international number-one bestselling author Jeffery Deaver. With over 50 million books sold in 150 countries, Mr. Deaver is an authority on bestselling fiction. His three-hour workshop will help you develop the tools you need to craft compelling commercial fiction, providing invaluable insight into the general rules of writing fiction, the elements of a successful novel, and the publication process. No matter what your level of experience, you won't want to miss out on this fantastic opportunity to hone your skills and advance your career.

The event will take place at the Culver City Four Points Sheraton (5990 Green Valley Circle, Culver City, CA, 90230). A free continental breakfast will be served at 8 a.m.; the program will run from 9 a.m.–noon.

Admission is \$50 for MWA members and \$65 for nonmembers. Parking is \$6.

To register, email **Elizabeth Little** for further instructions at president@socalmwa.com. Payment will be accepted by PayPal or check.

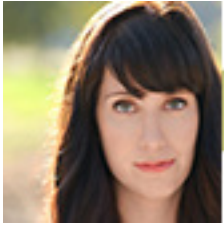
You won't want to miss this great opportunity to learn from a master. We look forward to seeing you September 16!

Annual Gumbo Party

Reservations Now
Open!

Bill Fitzhugh's House
Saturday, October 7
6 p.m.

[More info](#)



The President's Rap Sheet

Elizabeth Little

It's too hot for existential reflection and we have a busy few months ahead of us, so let's skip straight to business.

For all you late planners out there, we still have some spaces available for [MWA President Jeffery Deaver's September 16 workshop on Writing Commercial Fiction](#). This is a really incredible opportunity: A three-hour seminar taught by one of the absolute best in the business—plus complimentary pastries. I've seen the course materials, and I can assure you that there's something here for writers of all stripes. Just starting out? Jeff will walk you through the entire process of writing a novel, from conception to publication. Struggling with a manuscript? Jeff will help you trouble-shoot your plot and focus on the most important problem areas. Ready to send your book out into the world? Jeff's got you covered there, too.

So don't miss out on this one: Register today by emailing me at president@socalmwa.com.

For all you *early* planners out there, get excited for our most popular social event of the year, the [annual SoCalMWA Gumbo Party](#). I have to admit that when I first joined the chapter I was not remotely convinced that I wanted anything to do with gumbo from the Valley. But that was before I tried Bill Fitzhugh's gumbo and Craig Westerson's home-brewed ale. Now it's a party I look forward to for months—and friends, I don't even like parties.

So don't miss out on that one, either: Come spend a lovely evening out under the stars with your fellow chapter members. Email rsvp@socalmwa.com today.

And after that it's Bouchercon, NaNoWriMo, our last Tam luncheon of the year, the holiday party—and, somewhere in there, writing and working and living.

Which is why I hope that everyone has had a restful and enjoyable long holiday weekend—because we have a lot to look forward to this fall. And as ever, if there is anything else the chapter board can help you with, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

Now, back to standing directly in front of the air conditioner...

Elizabeth

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

Summer is officially be over and I couldn't be happier.

Never mind that the weatherman hasn't yet gotten the message. And it was a great, even productive, summer. But there's something about the beginning of the school year that gets me hyped up. It feels like a fresh start, even if I'm working on the same old manuscript.

The publishing world has been on an extended break and maybe some of us have been as well (see my raised hand). I'm here to tell you it's time to get back to work. If you've got a project languishing, maybe now's the time to get serious about it. Or, if you're one of the more disciplined among us, let this change of season motivate you even more.

I don't know about you, but I need regular doses of inspiration and motivation to keep me going. The beginning of fall, my favorite season, is just what I need as I bring this manuscript to completion.

You know what else is a great motivator? Hearing people like Jeffery Deaver speak about writing. If it's at all possible, attend the [MWA-U master class](#) led by Mr. Deaver later this month. Unfortunately, I'll have to wait for Bouchercon in Toronto for my writerly fix, but you can get it on September 16.

It's fall and I feel giddy. Now, if only the weather would cooperate.

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@yahoogroups.com to join
(members only)

TMOC Needs You!

TMOC is looking for articles (500–700 words) on subjects of interest to SoCalMWA members. This includes craft, marketing, and all aspects of publishing.

Content shouldn't be overtly promotional, but rather instructional or informational. Include a brief bio (100 words or less) and a headshot or cover image.

Send your questions and/or pitches to
themarchofcrime@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you!

OVER the TRANSOM

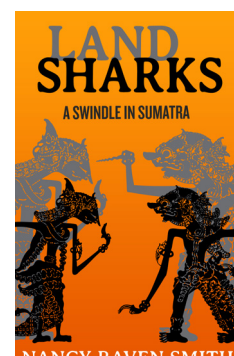
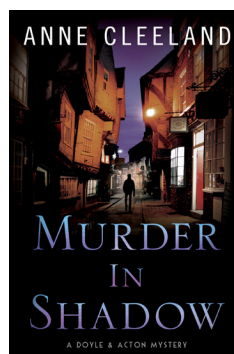
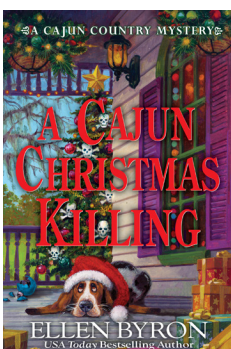
A CAJUN CHRISTMAS KILLING, the third book in **Ellen Byron's** Cajun Country Mystery series, received a starred review in *Publishers Weekly*. "Superb... There's no end to the mischief and mayhem in this exceptional cozy."

Anne Cleeland's MURDER IN SHADOW (#6 in the Doyle and Acton Scotland Yard series) is now available on Amazon.

Nancy Raven Smith won double awards at the Colorado Independent Publishers Association EVVY Competition. Her mystery/romantic suspense, LAND SHARKS: A SWINDLE IN SUMATRA, placed second in the Fiction: Mystery & Detective Category, and her co-written humorous memoir, THE RELUCTANT FARMER OF WHIMSEY HILL won an Award of Merit in the Autobiography/Memoir Category.

Robert S. Levinson will have a new short story, "The House Across the Street," in the November/December issue of *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*, which goes on sale October 24. Meanwhile, *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* has purchased another of his short stories, "All About Evie." No publication date yet set. He was in EQMM's May/June issue with "Rosalie Marx is Missing." Bob's current novel, THE STARDOM AFFAIR, is a Shamus Award Best Novel finalist.

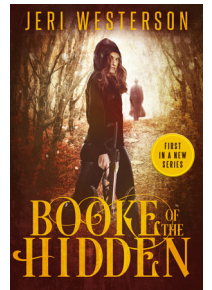
John Morgan Wilson's "The Case of the Curious Collector" has been selected for *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine's* special holiday/Sherlock Holmes issue due out at the end of the year. The story features mild-mannered estate attorney, K.L. Inger, who, inspired by his childhood hero Sherlock Holmes, decides to investigate the mysterious death of a wealthy client. Danger ensues!



Member APPEARANCES

Patricia Smiley will be on a panel at Bouchercon on Friday, October 13 at 10:00 a.m. in Sheraton B room called “Dark Side of the Loon: How can you write comedy about crime and death, and how can you not?” Additional panelists: Donna Andrews, Larry Kelter, Jess Lourey, Elizabeth J. Duncan, moderated by Susan Thibadeau.

Jeri Westerson is on book tour for her new urban fantasy series, *BOOKE OF THE HIDDEN*, releasing on Halloween. Go to BOOKEoftheHIDDEN.com for the full schedule.

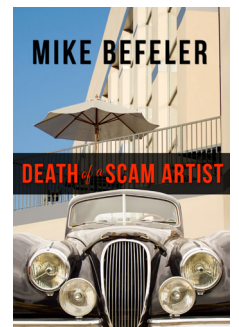


Nadine Nettmann, Sheila Sobel, and Elena Hartwell will discuss the art of writing and sign copies of their books at the Burbank Town Center Barnes and Noble on September 16 at 2 p.m.



Lee Goldberg and Clive Cussler were among the headliners at the Sister-in-Crime/Desert Sleuth’s WriteNow! Conference in Phoenix in August.

Mike Befeler will be signing and presenting his mystery novel, *DEATH OF A SCAM ARTIST*, at Gatsby Books, 5535 E. Spring Street, Long Beach, CA, on Sunday, September 10, 2017 at 3 p.m. The novel can also be ordered from your local bookseller, Amazon, Kindle, and Nook.



WRITER TYPES

PODCAST

CRIME QUIZ LIVE!



ERIC BEETNER
+ S.W. LAUDEN

VS.



NADINE NETTMANN



JORDAN HARPER



HARLEY JANE KOZAK

THE LAST BOOKSTORE LA—SEPT. 27, 7PM

How to Keep Fans Engaged “Between the Books”

by **Jennifer Moss**

I did what most writing experts tell you not to: I wrote the first three books in my mystery series before finding a publisher. Normally if you are planning a series it's best to perfect the first novel and pitch it before diving head first into writing a series. But alas, I did. So when my first book, *TOWN RED*, was picked up and published by Black Opal Books, I already knew what was going to happen in books two and three.

Even so, each novel takes multiple revisions, and so there was at least a year's gap between the publication of the first and second books in the series. During this time, I wanted to keep my readers engaged so they didn't lose interest before the next book came on the market, so I decided to write a “Between the Books” short story.

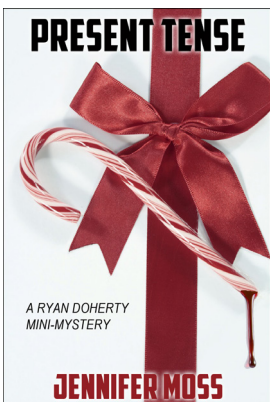
I knew my writing pace, and calculated I could get it out by mid-December. It was perfect timing to go with a holiday theme: What do you get your girlfriend who has thirty million dollars? But that was the B-story. Since my genre is mystery, I had to create a murder and an investigation as the primary plot line. The series is based in Chicago, and I found during my initial research that most of the homicides in Chicago are gang-related. I believed that would make for a great counterpoint to the detective's other problem of choosing a gift for his new super-wealthy mate.

My series is heavily character-driven and was inspired by the old hard-boiled detective stories, but with a metaphysical twist. I kept the same format, but was able to provide some deeper insight into the characters through the short story.

Once I'd written the short story, I ran it through my personal editor—a talented woman who knows my writing, my fictional world, and cast of characters. She also helped me name it: “Present Tense.” My publisher and I decided to release the story exclusively through Kindle Direct. This medium makes it affordable and accessible to both my fans and new readers, giving them the opportunity to get a quick feel for my writing and characters with minimal investment.

The last piece was the cover art. Although I always use a professional cover designer for my full-length novels, I decided to design the cover of “Present Tense” myself. I used the same signature font from my series to tie it in and simple imagery so it would “pop” in the Amazon feed. I do have a caveat for those considering designing their own book covers: I am proficient in Photoshop and have a background in basic design. If you don't have design training, always hire a professional (don't get me started on cover design...that's a whole other article).

All in all, it was a successful venture and I'm actually planning another “Between the Books” mystery that takes place between my fourth and fifth novels. If you're an author in the midst of a series and the next one won't be published for a while, I'd recommend giving your readers a little nugget in between. Writing a short story that continues the continuity of your series can serve as a gift to your fans, a device to keep them interested, and a marketing tool for new readers.



Jennifer Moss is a web developer by day, author by night, published in both fiction and non-fiction. She lives and writes in the California mountains near Yosemite National Park. For more information visit JenniferMoss.com.

Ladies of Intrigue

Featuring Remarkable Women Mystery Writers

Sunday, October 1, 2017

DoubleTree by Hilton Orange County Airport

8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Our 2017 Headliners

Marcia Clark



Marcia Clark is the author of seven bestselling legal thrillers. Her most recent series includes **Blood Defense**, **Moral Defense**, and **Snap Judgment** (pub date: August 29, 2017) featuring criminal defense attorney Samantha Brinkman. A practicing criminal lawyer since 1979, she joined the L.A. District Attorney's office in 1981, where she served as prosecutor for the trials of Robert Bardo, convicted of killing actress Rebecca Schaeffer, and most notably, O.J. Simpson. She recently re-released her 1997 #1 New York Times bestselling book on the trial, **Without a Doubt**, as an e-book.

Wendy Corsi Staub



Wendy Corsi Staub (aka Wendy Markham) is *The New York Times* and *USA Today* best-selling author of more than eighty novels and has a Hallmark movie based on her books that will debut this Fall. Renowned for her tales of suspense, she has twice been nominated for the Simon & Schuster Mary Higgins Clark Award and is the recipient of the prestigious RITA Award. She lives in the New York area with her husband and their two children.

Host:

Barbara DeMarco-Barrett's first book, **Pen on Fire: A Busy Woman's Guide to Igniting the Writer Within**, made the *Los Angeles Times* best-seller list and received an American Society of Journalists and Authors Outstanding Book Award. She has a story in **Orange County Noir** and **USA Noir**, published by Akashic. She's host of Writers on Writing, KUCI-FM, Weds. mornings at 9.

Barbara DeMarco-Barrett



Panelists:

Jill Amadio, Greta Boris, Carola Dunn, Naomi Hirahara, Sybil Johnson, Elizabeth Little, Nadine Nettmann, Kaira Rouda, Alexandra Sokoloff, Jeri Westerson, Patricia Wynn, Pamela Samuels Young

Hosted by Orange County Sisters in Crime (a non-profit organization)

Location: DoubleTree by Hilton Santa Ana Orange County Airport
201 E. MacArthur Blvd, Santa Ana, CA

Additional information and registration: Mystery Ink Bookstore
www.mysteryink.com, (714) 743-6127



[Register here](#)

Crime CALENDAR

Annual SoCalMWA Gumbo Party

Saturday, October 7

6 p.m.



The annual MWA SoCal Gumbo Party, graciously hosted once again by Master Chef Bill Fitzhugh and his wife Kendall, will be held on Saturday, October 7, starting at 6pm. Join us for great food, great company, and—perhaps best of all—Craig Westerson’s famous home-brewed ale.

This is a truly unique event—arguably our most popular of the year!—and it’s absolutely free for members. So come out and enjoy a night under the stars with your fellow MWA SoCal members.

Wine and soft drinks will be available; feel free to BYOB.

[RSVP for the address and additional details.](#) Members and plus-ones only, please.

More criminal happenings

Sep 16 – [MWA University: “Writing Commercial Fiction with Jeffery Deaver.” Culver City, CA](#)

October 1 – [Ladies of Intrigue, Santa Ana, CA](#)

October 7 – [SoCalMWA Gumbo Party, Los Angeles, CA](#)

October 12 – 15 – [Bouchercon World Mystery Conference, Toronto, Canada](#)

November 4 – [Murder and Mayhem Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI](#)

December 10 – [SoCalMWA Holiday Party, Los Angeles, CA](#)

The LAST WORD

“Detective Davie Richards arrived at Hyperion Sewage Treatment Plant near Dockweiler Beach on Tuesday morning at seven forty-five, shortly after an employee found what appeared to be a white female wedged between the claws of a rotating grinder.”

—Patricia Smiley, PACIFIC HOMICIDE