



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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Tucson Festival of Books

March 10–11, 2018
Tucson, AZ

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DECEMBER 3, 2017

SINC/LA AND MWA SOCAL PRESENT

One Killer Holiday Party

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In the spirit of the season, MWA SoCal and Sisters in Crime/LA are joining forces to throw a killer holiday bash in celebration of an amazing year for the Southern California mystery-writing community. Members and plus-ones only.

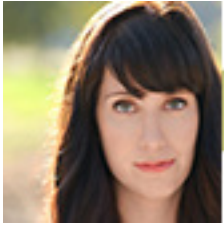
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The President's Rap Sheet

Elizabeth Little

As my tenure as chapter president comes to a close, I wanted to take the opportunity to call attention to all the people whose hard work and dedication have made the past year's events possible—because it's been quite a year: luncheons, write-ins, panels, conferences, happy hours, seminars, readings, festivals, parties.

First and foremost I must thank our chapter's indefatigable board of directors, who have put in countless hours of work—and countless more hours making sense of my late-night emails. **Sue Ann Jaffarian** deserves particular mention for taking on the mammoth task of co-chairing CCWC—which, thanks to her and to the amazing **Rochelle Staab**, came off beautifully.

I'd also like to thank **Bill Fitzhugh** and his wife, Kendall, our impossibly generous Gumbo hosts; **Fred Andersen**, who has been ably managing our presence at the Tucson Festival of Books for several years now; and **Holly West**, this newsletter's endlessly charming and extremely capable editor. I am very grateful, too, for the support of our friends at Sisters in Crime in Los Angeles, Orange County, Arizona, and San Diego. I hope our groups will continue to work together in the coming years.

But most of all I want to thank you, my fellow chapter members, for choosing to be a part of SoCalMWA. I know it's not necessarily an easy choice, no matter MWA's bona fides. Money is tight and time is short, and I'm keenly aware (as perhaps I've mentioned in these pages before) how daunting the prospect of social interaction can be, particularly if you're new to the area or new to the field. Together, however—over many years—we have built an extraordinary literary community here in Southern California. It's very much something to be proud of.

Not that there isn't still a great deal of work to be done. But I know next year's board will tackle these challenges with confidence and creativity and will put together a fantastic slate of events and resources that will speak to every writer among us, no matter where they may be in their life or career.

I, meanwhile, am looking forward to embarking on a new adventure or two—just as soon as I finally finish this book.

In the meantime, I wish you all a very happy holiday season and the best of luck in 2018. Thank you again—it has been a great privilege to serve as your chapter president.

Elizabeth

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

Confession: I'm having a hard time getting into the holiday spirit. Of course, as I write this, it's only November 30, so perhaps there's still time.

Since this is the last issue of 2017, I'd like to thank all of you for your support over the last year. Specifically, **Elizabeth Little** has been wonderful to work with—her attention to detail has surely made this newsletter better. Who knew there was such a thing as an en dash? I didn't, but now I do.

I'd also like to thank those members who stepped up to contribute articles and event wrap-ups to the newsletter this year. I put the call out and you answered. I've enjoyed learning from you and hope to learn more next year, because I know you all have an article in you, just waiting to be published.

Finally, thank you to this month's contributors. **Pat H. Broeske** provides an [excellent summary](#) of November's Tam Luncheon, **Peter DiChellis** writes about the [useful role humor plays in crime fiction](#), and **Martin Roy Hill** has [submitted a primer](#) on on military law enforcement.

Wishing you all a happy holiday season. See you next 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:

Christina Hoag
Ivy Pochoda
Kaira Rouda
Jennifer Younger



OVER the TRANSOM

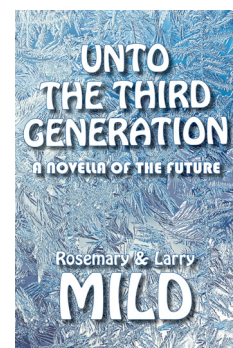
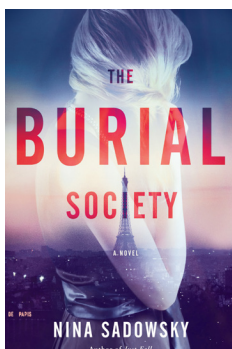
A-LIST, the next in **DP Lyle's** Shamus-nominated Jake Longly comedic thriller series, will be released December 12. [Details here.](#)

Nina Sadowsky's second thriller, *THE BURIAL SOCIETY*, will be released on January 30 by Ballantine. Catherine, no last name, doesn't bury the dead. She rescues the living—from intolerable, abusive, dangerous lives. Her dark net-based witness protection program, the Burial Society, is the last hope for people who desperately need to disappear. Michelle Richmond calls *THE BURIAL SOCIETY* “a voyeur's dream, laying bare the best and worst of human nature,” and Karen Harper deems it a “can't-let-go read.”

James Scott Bell's new writing book, *HOW TO WRITE PULP FICTION*, has been published by Compendium Press.

“The Mysterious Meatball Autopsy,” a humorous You-Solve-It murder mystery by **Peter DiChellis**, appeared in *Mystery Weekly Magazine* (November 1). Additionally, *MALICE DOMESTIC 13: MURDER MOST GEOGRAPHICAL* (Wildside Press) accepted Peter's humorous private eye story “The Belle Hope” for publication in April.

Rosemary & Larry Mild have released *UNTO THE THIRD GENERATION*, A Novella of the Future. Unaware of each other's existence, Leonard Tall-Chief, a high-steel worker, and Francine Mapleton, a waitress, postpone their destinies for untold generations by volunteering to become cryonauts. Then, in 2039, two events shake the world. The first is a giant breakthrough in which no human will ever go hungry again, but the second poses a threat to the human race itself—a disease that tortures, teases, and ultimately kills. It will take three generations before these two events clash, and when they do, Leonard and Francine's lives will be at stake.

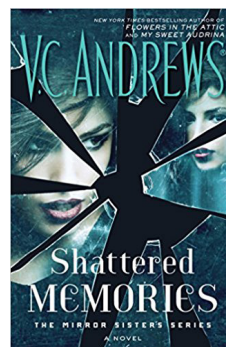


OVER the TRANSOM

BLOOD TRUTH, the fourth novel in the Anthony Award-winning series by **Matt Coyle**, comes out on Dec. 5. “Coyle is the real deal, and this is the best PI novel I’ve read in years, period.”—Steve Hamilton, *New York Times* bestselling author

SHATTERED MEMORIES, the third novel in the V.C. Andrews The Mirror Sisters series is out now. V.C. Andrews is having a resurgence under the pen of ghostwriter **Andrew Neiderman**, who celebrates his 30th year writing V.C. Andrews, capped with the sixth straight film adaptation of a V.C. Andrews novel, HEAVEN, filmed and in editing for airing next year. Neiderman, the author best known for *The Devil’s Advocate*, announced his libretto of the stage musical will premiere in South Korea next fall.

Martin Roy Hill’s latest Linus Schag, NCIS thriller, THE BUTCHER’S BILL, was awarded Best Mystery in the 2017 Annual Independent Book Awards.



Member APPEARANCES

Nancy Cole Silverman will be interviewing Kathryn Sermak about her new biography, *MS. D AND ME, LIFE WITH THE INVINCIBLE BETTE DAVIS*, at the Glendale Public Library on Saturday, December 9 at 3:15 p.m. In addition to interviewing Ms. Sermak, Silverman will also be signing for her own new book, *ROOM FOR DOUBT*.



Around 75 people turned out for **Sheila Lowe's** launch of *WRITTEN OFF*. **Debbie Mitsch** of Mystery Ink brought books for sale; Mimi's Café in Ventura supplied the food and did the cleanup—so much nicer than doing it yourself! Drawings for a dozen prizes made for extra fun, with Sheila giving away a character name in her next book and a handwriting analysis.

Daryl Wood Gerber and **Ellen Byron** will be discussing and signing their new books, *A DEADLY ÉCLAIR* and *A CAJUN CHRISTMAS KILLING*, at Vroman's Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Avenue in Pasadena on Monday, December 4 at 7 p.m. As a bonus, they'll be serving treats made from recipes found in both books.

San Diego's **Mysterious Galaxy** holiday party is on December 9, at 2 p.m. 5943 Balboa Avenue, Ste. 100, San Diego, CA. **Ellen Byron, DP Lyle, Daryl Wood Gerber, Kwei Querty,** and **Kathy Krevat** are among the featured authors.

Come to **DP Lyle's** A-LIST Launch Party at Mystery Ink on Sunday, December 17 at 2 p.m.. [Details here.](#)

Jeri Westerson will be at the following locations, launching her new urban fantasy/paranormal romance, *BOOKE OF THE HIDDEN*:

- ILLINOIS: December 7, 3:30 p.m. (CST), SKYPING with library friends at Warren County Library in Illinois! If you want to get in on it, simply get yourself to the library. There will be goodies there! Public Square, Momouth, IL 61642. Contact Rebecca Eaton.
- GLENDALE, CA: December 9, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.: Glendale Downtown Central Library. A TON of authors will be there. 222 E. Harvard Street, Glendale, CA.
- TEMPE, AZ: December 13, 6:30–7:30 p.m.: Tempe Library. More spooky fun with a presentation, “The World of the Paranormal: A Look at the History of Magical Books and Demons.” 3500 S. Rural Road, Tempe, AZ.
- TUCSON, AZ: December 16, 1–3 p.m.: Mostly Books. More spooky fun with munchies, presentation, and giveaways. 6208 E. Speedway Boulevard, Tuscon, AZ.
- TUCSON, AZ: December 17, 2 p.m.: Wheeler Taft Abbett Library. More spooky fun with a presentation: “The World of the Paranormal: A Look at the History of Magical Books and Demons.” 7800 N Schisler Drive, Tucson, AZ.

Member APPEARANCES

Patricia Smiley will be signing her new novel *OUTSIDE THE WIRE* at the following places:

- December 9, 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.: Glendale Downtown Central Library, 222 E. Harvard Street, Glendale, CA 91205. 3 hours free parking at Marketplace parking structure across the street. Author Signing Fair with 30 authors!

Matt Coyle will be signing his new novel, *BLOOD TRUTH*, at the following places:

- December 5, 7:30 p.m.: Warwick's Bookstore, La Jolla, CA.
- December 7, 7:00 p.m.: Book People, Austin, TX.
- December 9, 2:00 p.m.: Book Carnival, Orange, CA.

Matt Coyle (*BLOOD TRUTH*) and **Patricia Smiley** (*OUTSIDE THE WIRE*) will appear together at the following places:

- December 3, 1:00 p.m.: Book Passage, 51 Tamal Vista Boulevard, Corte Madera, CA 94925, (415) 927-0960.
- December 11, 7:00 p.m.: Vroman's Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91101, (626) 449-5320.
- December 16, 3:00 p.m.: Gatsby Books, 5535 E. Spring Street, Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 208-5862.



Andrew Neiderman, here with wife Diane, recently featured in an article and on the cover of *Live Magazine*.

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!

November Event Wrap-Up: Weaponry Experts Take Aim at Inaccuracies

by **Pat H. Broeske**

Whether for an insightful sleuth or a dastardly villain, weaponry is more than an accessory to crime. The way it's utilized by writers can make or break a story's authenticity.

A trio of weaponry experts—locked and loaded with advice—spoke at the November meeting at the Tam. The authoritative line-up consisted of **David Putnam**, former police officer and author of four books, including *THE VANQUISHED*; Daric Manser, Special Agent with the FBI's bomb technician program; and Janet Joyce Holden, author of novels including the *Origins of Blood* vampire series. FBI Special Agent Thomas Leighton, a longtime mystery genre fan who teaches *Hostage and Crisis Negotiation* for police and government agencies and is a FBI Firearms Instructor, moderated.

Topics included popular misconceptions about weaponry, specifically as related to guns, bombs, and swordplay.

Regarding the latter, Holden—who has trained with swords for six years—cautioned against mimicking what's often depicted in movies. Referencing scenes of combatants (think: *The Princess Bride* and *The Adventures of Robin Hood*) whose duels are punctuated by clever dialogue, she pointed out that “In real life, there's no time for witty talk. You want to stick it in your opponent without the talk.”

She credits her hands-on experience with rapier, dagger, foil, and other sharp-edged blades with bringing authenticity to her writing. “You get a feel for how the weapon affects your body mechanics.” Holding out a rapier (weighing two-and-a-half pounds), she explained, “You get an appreciation for what it takes to wield and control this thing.”

Like Holden, Putnam targeted movies—and TV—for unrealistic weaponry use. Especially in regard to police shootings. Putnam, whose law enforcement career found him working teams for SWAT, Violent Crimes, Internal Affairs, and more, said the reason-real life confrontations sometimes involve multiple shots fired—instead of a single bullet taking down the bad guy (à la TV dramas)—is because “a bullet doesn't immediately stop someone who's coming at you.” Getting winged in the leg or arm may not deter an assailant. He cited cases where shootouts continued, despite multiple traumatic wounds.

“People don't always know they've been shot,” added Leighton. “So, they still go running. Gunfire doesn't immediately stop someone unless the brain or spine are hit.”

Discussing authenticity of weaponry, Putnam noted, “On TV, especially, people pick up the wrong weapons. Glocks don't have a safety catch. And they don't ‘click.’”

Manser warned against buying into the notion that evidence is “blown to smithereens” during a bombing. “There's always evidence,” he said. “A lot of things come into play with an IED [Improvised Explosive Device].” Post-blast evidence includes bomb fragments, residue from the explosive, even possible DNA from the bomber.

Manser, who investigated the 2013 Boston marathon bombing, explained that IEDs get into the country three ways—“buy it, steal it, make it”—and that bombing investigations are aided by commonalities. A special clearance is required of all technicians, who must attend a six-week program at the Huntsville, Alabama-based Hazardous Devices School, which

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A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Murder: Using Humor in Mysteries

by Peter DiChellis

I enjoy reading and writing mysteries peppered with humor. Counterintuitive as it might seem, fictional tales of appalling crimes and their life-crushing consequences are often enhanced by hoots, yuks, and knee-slappers. How can that possibly be? For me, at least, there are several reasons to inject humor into mystery and crime stories.

1. Humor provides breathing space, a touch of comic relief from the so-often dismal themes in these stories. To paraphrase an old political saw, mystery and crime stories ain't beanbag. Humor can deliver a welcome break in the tension.
2. Humorous passages give camouflage for clues. This is a reader's brain on humor: Giddy and giggly and distracted, but not focused on rational analysis. Could someone overlook an important clue during a bout of head-shaking, eyeball-rolling chortling? Count on it.
3. Humor is just flat-out entertaining. Among the many splendid reasons to read a good mystery, or any engrossing fiction, is simply to enjoy an entertaining diversion. Humor amps up the entertainment.
4. Humor helps create likability. In real life, we tend to like and appreciate good-humored people who can make us laugh. Why wouldn't we feel the same about fictional characters and stories?
5. Injections of humor might help a story stand out in a crowded field. By definition mystery and crime stories, like all genre fiction, typically incorporate common elements that readers have come to expect. Humor is one way to add a distinctive element that helps a story stand apart.
6. Humorous incidents can erect unusual and revealing obstacles for characters to overcome. Fictional detectives already endure wily suspects, unreliable witnesses, contaminated evidence, and other impediments to success. Frustrate them with some funny stuff too and see how they handle it.
7. Mysteries provide lots of creative opportunities for humor. The cast of characters, from detectives to sidekicks to suspects to witnesses, is rich with eccentric possibilities. Strange clues and weird circumstances abound. Settings range from seedy barrooms to stately mansions, from trailer parks to office towers.

Peter DiChellis concocts sinister and sometimes comedic tales for anthologies, ezines, and magazines, including his humorous private eye yarn, "The Bell Hope," which will appear in the upcoming anthology, *MALICE DOMESTIC 13: MYSTERY MOST GEOGRAPHICAL*. He is a member of the Short Mystery Fiction Society, Mystery Writers of America, Private Eye Writers of America, and International Thriller Writers. For more, visit his website [Murder and Fries](#).

Military Law Enforcement for Crime Writers

by **Martin Roy Hill**

Recently, I've assisted four fellow authors with questions about U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement operations, drawing on my 13 years of active and reserve experience in that service. I realized military law enforcement is a bewildering environment for many writers, particularly those who never served in uniform. With this primer, I hope to provide some clarity to the subject.

The United States has five military branches. Besides the Coast Guard (yes, it is a military service), there are the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. Each of these branches has its own police force and criminal investigators.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service, or NCIS, is probably best known because of the popular TV show. The Army has its Criminal Investigation Command, better known as the CID, a throwback to when it was called the Criminal Investigative Division. The Air Force has its Office of Special Investigations (OSI), and the Coast Guard has the Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS).

All of these investigative agencies are totally autonomous and operate outside of their services' operational command structure to minimize interference with their investigations. Their jurisdiction extends only to criminal activities affecting personnel or property belonging to their parent service.

The Marine Corps also has a Criminal Investigation Division. Unlike the Army CID, however, Marine CID investigators work for the Provost Marshal of the base to which they are assigned. Major crimes reaching outside the Provost Marshal's jurisdiction are referred to NCIS.

Investigators for these military agencies can be civilians or active duty or reserve commissioned officers, warrant officers, or enlisted personnel.

The next layer of military law enforcement is the local base police force. As generic as it sounds, the term "military police" refers only to soldiers and Marines who specialize in law enforcement operations, either on base or in a combat zone. In the former case, MPs act as the police force on Army and Marine bases. They work for the base Provost Marshal, essentially the installation's police chief. MPs also work closely with civilian federal police officers employed on their bases.

In a combat zone, MPs provide security on forward bases and convoys, operate checkpoints, and provide traffic management and direction to long convoys.

Navy masters-at-arms (MAA) are law-enforcement-trained sailors who act as the police and security force on Navy bases and large ships. MAAs operate entry gates, respond to security threats, investigate minor crimes, and run Navy briggs. They, too, work closely with their civilian federal police counterparts.

Air Force law enforcement airmen are called Security Forces. On U.S. bases, the Security Forces provide basic police services; when deployed to a combat zone, they are charged with defending their airfield.

The most unusual of the services, the Coast Guard, falls under civilian control, currently residing under the Department of Homeland Security. That's because, unlike the other branches, the Coast Guard is also a law enforcement agency.

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Event Wrap-Up

[continued from pg 8](#)

is funded and managed by the FBI. Trainees are taught to recognize types of explosive devices, trigger functions, hazardous materials that are involved, and more. “Because of that training,” Manser added, “technicians [from different agencies, and parts of the country] are able to integrate well.”

Topics discussed in the ninety-minute panel also included body performance during weapon use, including shooting. As Putnam noted, the Weaver stance, developed in the 1950s and favored by TV and movie characters ranging from James Bond to the *Miami Vice* cops, is taught by the LAPD. The FBI uses the Isosceles stance, which was popularized in the 1980s.

Whatever the firing posture, accuracy in regard to the weapon of choice can amp up the tension, and act as a come-on for today’s savvy readers.

Knowledge—like weaponry—is power.

Military Enforcement for Crime Writers

[continued from pg 10](#)

Technically, all Coast Guard commissioned officers, warrant officers, and enlisted petty officers are federal law enforcement officers, though not everyone in the service takes part in L/E operations.

Under Section 2 of Title 14 USC, the Coast Guard has authority to enforce U.S. laws on all federal waterways, which include coastal waters, the Great Lakes, the great rivers, and, to some extent, on the high seas. Included in its jurisdiction are anti-smuggling and anti-terrorism laws.

The Coast Guard also enforces international maritime laws, including anti-piracy laws. The U.S. Navy has no authority to enforce anti-piracy laws, though it does operate task forces aimed at deterring piracy. The only exception is by special international agreement or in the event pirates attack a U.S.-flagged vessel.

The Navy also has no authority to enforce anti-smuggling laws. Coast Guard law enforcement detachments, or LEDET’s, are assigned to Navy vessels when those ships are deployed on anti-drug and anti-piracy patrols. The LEDET’s conduct boardings of suspect vessels and initiate any arrests.

Most Coast Guard small boats, patrol boats, and cutters are all armed to varying degrees for law enforcement operations. At a minimum, this includes a two-man boarding team that has the authority to stop and search vessels suspected of criminal activity.



Martin Roy Hill is the author of the Peter Brandt mysteries and the Linus Schag, NCIS, thrillers, as well as numerous short stories. In addition to the Coast Guard, he also served in a component of the California National Guard as executive officer of a state military police unit and as a medic on his local sheriff’s wilderness SAR team.

You Oughta Be in Pictures
November Tam Luncheon



Speakers Janet Joyce Holden and David Putnam

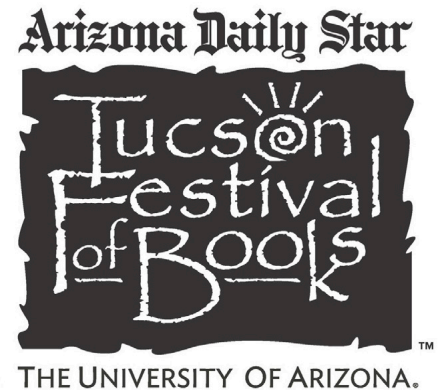


Crime CALENDAR

Tucson Festival of Books (Tucson, AZ) March 10–11, 2018

SoCalMWA is sponsoring a booth at the Tucson Festival of Books in 2018. The event, March 10-11, is one of the biggest book festivals in the country. It is a great place to meet readers, writers, and book industry people. You can schedule a time to sell and sign at the MWA tent on either Saturday or Sunday. First come/first served. For info or to sign up contact Fred Andersen, fxandersen@msn.com.

[Click here for more information](#)



More Criminal Happenings

December 3 – [SoCalMWA Holiday Party, Los Angeles, CA](#)

2018

March 10–11 – [Tucson Festival of Books, Tucson, AZ](#)

March 17 – [Murder and Mayhem in Chicago, Chicago, IL](#)

March 22–25 – [Left Coast Crime, Reno, NV](#)

April 27–29 – [Malice Domestic 30, Bethesda, MD](#)

July 10–14 – [Thrillerfest, New York, NY](#)

September 6–9 – [Bouchercon, St. Petersburg, FL](#)

The LAST WORD

“This is police business,’ Doyle announced, which was sort of the truth, if you didn’t count the illegal weapons, and the ongoing personal vendettas.”

—Anne Cleeland, MURDER IN CONTAINMENT