

September 2018



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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Luncheon at the Tam O'Shanter

Sunday, November 4

12 p.m.

**COLD CASE INVESTIGATION!
THE COLDER THE CASE, THE HOTTER
THE STORY**

In 1986, newlywed Sherri Rasmussen was murdered in her home. The Los Angeles Police Department presumed two scenarios: 1) her husband did it, or 2) intruders did it. Husbands are often the perpetrators of spousal murders. Yet, there had been an uptick of residential burglaries in the Rasmussen neighborhood. Despite a thorough investigation no suspect was arrested and the case remained open, unsolved for 23 years.

In February 2009, Detective Robert Bub, Officer in Charge of the Van Nuys Cold Case Homicide Unit, directed detectives to re-examine the case. Immediately, one detail in the murder book sparked to life: DNA testing determined that the suspected killer...was a woman. A vigorous reworking of the case would lead detectives to a suspect that would shock the LAPD.

Author Terri Nolan interviews the investigators who dug deep. Join us November 4 for an insider look into how the LAPD finally got justice for Sherri Rasmussen and the secret investigation that captured one of their own.

[RSVPs will open in early October.](#)

Bouchercon 2018
Passport to Murder

September 6-9
St. Petersburg, FL

[More info](#)

Save the Date!
SoCalMWA Gumbo Party

Saturday, October 27

Hosted by Bill & Kendall Fitzhugh



The President's Rap Sheet

Glen Erik Hamilton

Florida beckons. Bouchercon in St. Petersburg will offer rum drinks and the possibility of alligator encounters, much like B-Con two years ago in New Orleans (gator sightings were rare in Toronto last year, I've been told).

I'm always delighted when a convention trip rolls around, but this year feels special. For reasons both financial and familial, we took 2017 off from the convention circuit.* No Left Coast Crime, no ThrillerFest, no B-Con. After four action-packed years of attending every con possible and, not coincidentally, launching my first books, I was suddenly stuck at home and the day job. Decompressing and depressed, and assiduously avoiding social media. Happening across photos of friends during their convention celebrations felt like being kicked in the shins. Curse you, Instagram.

Many of you know exactly what I'm talking about, and I hope that you also know the joy of reconnecting after a break. While it's still tough to find the time and resources, we eased back into travel this year with LCC in Reno and now St. Pete, fortuitously combining the convention with a family reunion. It will be wonderful to see so many friends in person again. Absence did make the heart grow fonder.

The Big Dream? To arrange our lives to visit new conferences far and wide, writing chapters and accumulating frequent flyer miles at the same time. Murder and Mayhem in Chicago, Malice Domestic, Crimefest in Bristol, Theakston Old Peculier in Harrogate (yep, that's spelled correctly), Bloody Scotland, Iceland Noir... We're gonna make it happen. I'll need a "go-bag" with everything necessary to hop on a plane at a moment's notice, and an extra go-bag to carry the horde of books obtained at each con. The *Really* Big Dream is that we can *all* go, our entire chapter. Race you there.

Writers are fun, and we're especially fun in large numbers. Whether or not you can make the upcoming conventions, join us for our chapter's annual Gumbo Party on October 27, or our next luncheon on November 4, on cold case investigations with the LAPD.

* with the single exception of the California Crime Writers Conference in L.A. Mark your calendars for the next CCWC, June 8-9 2019; it's going to be terrific!

Glen

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

I have a confession to make. I can't think of anything to write for The Editor's Corner this month. That almost never happens.

Usually, it's like writing anything else—even if a topic or scene doesn't come immediately to mind when I sit down to write, the simple act of getting some broad strokes down will usually lead to something more concrete and purposeful. But today—nothing.

I always say that the muse is in the writing. By that I mean that sitting around waiting for inspiration to strike before I start writing is a sure way to never get anything written. Many of my biggest ideas have come *during* a writing session—things I probably never would've thought of pop out of seemingly nowhere. That, to me, is the magic of creativity. When you stop trying to control it and just let the words flow. When your characters begin to reveal themselves without you giving conscience thought to their words or choices.

It's such a delicious feeling.

At some point, of course, you will have to be mindful of these things, because storytelling requires structure. Certain questions must be asked and answered. But that's for the editing stage. Allow yourself a little bit of freedom in your first draft.

I'm not sure if inspiration—certainly not brilliance—struck while I wrote this brief piece, so perhaps my argument is flawed. But the page is no longer blank and I left you with something I think is important.

The muse is in the writing.

Like Glen, I'll be traveling to St. Petersburg, FL next week for Bouchercon. It's hard to believe I've been attending these conferences since 2009, but I know many of you've been going for much longer. I've heard it called "Band Camp for Writers," and I can't disagree with that.

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:
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Yahoo! Group**

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(members only)

OVER the TRANSOM

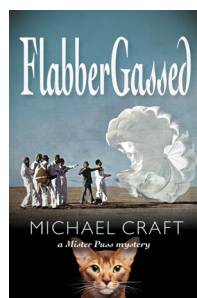
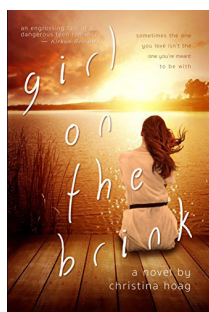
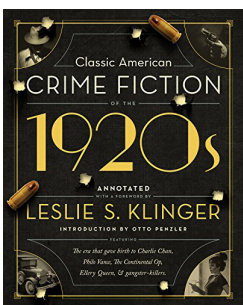
Les Klinger's newest book, CLASSIC AMERICAN CRIME FICTION OF THE 1920s, is due out from Pegasus Books on October 2. The volume includes Earl Derr Biggers's HOUSE WITHOUT A KEY (the first Charlie Chan Novel); S. S. Van Dine's THE BENSON MURDER CASE (the first Philo Vance novel); THE ROMAN HAT MYSTERY, the first Ellery Queen novel; Dashiell Hammett's RED HARVEST (his first novel, featuring the Continental Op), and LITTLE CAESAR by W. R. Burnett, the basis for the famous Edward G. Robinson film. Klinger has added hundreds of notes to these works as well as more than a hundred illustrations. The book is introduced by Otto Penzler.

Christina Hoag is thrilled to announce that her YA novel, GIRL ON THE BRINK, a story about dating violence that made *Suspense Magazine's* 2016 Best of YA, is now out on audiobook. [Click here for Christina's upcoming appearances.](#)

FLABBERGASSED, by **Michael Craft**, is the first in a new series of gay cat mysteries (the amateur sleuth is gay, not the cat), which will be published by Questover Press in hardcover, paperback, and eBook on September 10. *Kirkus* praised it as "an exuberant murder mystery... delightfully offbeat."

Lisa Brackmann's sixth novel, BLACK SWAN RISING, publishes September 8, from Midnight Ink. *Publishers Weekly* called BLACK SWAN RISING a "riveting thriller," while *Booklist* characterized it as "an absorbing and apocalyptic vision of American politics that leaves the reader hoping it will never come to this." *International Noir Fiction* said: "Brackmann's novel isn't only dark and foreboding, it's also human and humane. The characters take us along this difficult journey through their compelling personal engagement with what's going on. And the action of the novel doesn't indulge in the cliches of the genre: The twists and turns of the plot are uniquely Brackmann's."

Gary Phillips and Christa Faust's hardcore prose adaptation of the classic Batman vs. Joker graphic novel, THE KILLING JOKE, takes place in a 1988 Gotham City patrolled by airships; the origin of the Joker is revealed...possibly; a wisecracking Batgirl (Barbara Gordon, Commissioner Jim Gordon's librarian-daughter) takes on the bad guys alongside a grim Dark Knight; giggle sniff, a crack-like drug derived from Joker venom floods the streets; bent plainclothesman Harvey Dent schemes to rip off a drug lord; and the Joker shoots and cripples Barbara, putting a harrowing video of that on the newfangled Arpanet as Batman burns through the night hunting him down. In bookstores everywhere September 25.



OVER the TRANSOM

MARDI GRAS MURDER, the 4th book in **Ellen Byron's** award-winning Cajun Country Mystery series, launches October 9th. *Laissez les bon temps rouler!* Additionally, Ellen signed a three-book deal with Kensington Publishing for a new series titled The Catering Hall Mysteries.

Mike Befeler's mystery novel UNSTUFF YOUR STUFF will be released in October 2018. In UNSTUFF YOUR STUFF, 68-year-old Millicent Hargrove must deal with the murder of her husband as she begins her new life as a widow and professional organizer. She escapes attempts on her own life and figures out the mystery of the cryptic messages left by her husband. She discovers how to organize people's stuff while sorting through the clutter from the secret life her husband led.

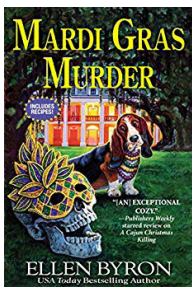
DP Lyle has a new podcast series on Authors on the Air called [“Criminal Mischief: The Art and Science of Crime Fiction.”](#)

Shannon Baker is pleased to announce the release of BITTER RAIN, the third in the Kate Fox mystery series, on August 28. Follow Kate as she searches for a missing girl on the Lakota reservation. As a bonus to celebrate the release, STRIPPED BARE, the first in the series, will be on sale through the month of September for \$2.99.

A WORLD OF HORROR, edited by **Eric J. Guignard**, will be released by Dark Moon Books on September 10: Every nation of the globe has unique tales to tell, whispers that settle in through the land, creatures or superstitions that enliven the night, but rarely do readers get to experience such a diversity of these voices in one place as in this anthology. Beautifully illustrated by artist Steve Lines.

John Shepphird's short story, “Headhunter” appears in the latest issue of *Down & Out: The Magazine* edited by Rick Ollerman. “Headhunter” is a prequel to The Shill Trilogy (3 novellas). The story establishes the down-on-her-luck actress title-character, Jane Innes, a few months before THE SHILL takes place. Audio of the story is available for free as a podcast--link found at johnshepphird.com.

BROKEN WINDOWS, the sequel to **Paul D. Marks'** Shamus Award-winning mystery-thriller WHITE HEAT, drops on September 10. *Publishers Weekly* calls it a “solid sequel.” Available in the usual places from Down & Out Books.



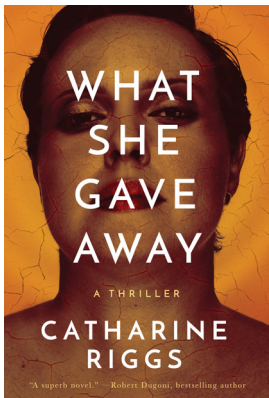
Member APPEARANCES

Christina Hoag will be appearing on a panel at Bouchercon discussing “Lock Up: Writing about Crimes, Penalties and Prisons,” along with James L’Etoile, Nancy Allen, and Jamie Freveletti.

Patricia Smiley will appear on the panel “Both Sides of the Pond: Fictional Investigators in the US and UK.”

Patricia Smiley will be one of the featured authors, along with **Connie Di Marco**, **Paul D. Marks**, and **Carlene O’Neill** at an author dinner in support of the Santa Clarita Friends of the Library at the Old Town Library Newhall, 24500 Main Street, Santa Clarita, on Saturday, September 22 at 6 p.m. For tickets or more information, visit SantaClaritaFOL.com.

Jeri Westerson will be releasing her 11th Crispin Guest Medieval Noir novel, *THE DEEPEST GRAVE* at the following locations: Saturday, September 8, 4 pm–Vroman’s Bookstore 695 E Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91101. / Sunday, September 9, 2 pm — Mystery Ink Bookstore 8907 Warner Ave #135, Huntington Beach, CA 92647



Catharine Riggs is partnering with the Santa Barbara Public Library to hold a benefit launch party to support The Friends of the Library. The interview, signing and reading of her debut novel *WHAT SHE GAVE AWAY* will take place on Thursday September 27 from 5:30 until 7:00 at the downtown library’s Faulkner Gallery. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the event will be donated to The Friends of the Santa Barbara Public Library.

TMOE Needs You!

TMOE 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.

Ladies of Intrigue

Featuring Remarkable Women Mystery Writers

Sunday, October 7, 2018

Mesa Verde Country Club

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

Our 2018 Headliners

Carola Dunn



CAROLA DUNN is the author of over 60 books, most set in England where she was born and raised. Her Daisy Dalrymple series is set in the 1920s; the 23rd, *The Corpse at the Crystal Palace*, was released Spring 2018. Her Cornish mysteries now number 4. She has also written over 30 Regencies. After many years in Southern California, she now lives in Oregon with her dog Trillian, but often visits the grandkids in Carlsbad.

Hallie Ephron



Hallie Ephron is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Never Tell a Lie*, *Come and Find Me*, *There Was an Old Woman*, and *Night Night, Sleep Tight*. She is a four-time finalist for the Mary Higgins Clark Award, and her *Writing & Selling Your Mystery Novel* was an Edgar Award finalist. For twelve years she was the crime fiction book reviewer for the *Boston Globe*. Hallie lives near Boston, Massachusetts.

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:

Lisa Brackmann, Janelle Brown, Ellen Byron, Anne Cleeland, Hannah Dennison, Naomi Hirahara, Rachel Howzel Hall, Maddie Margarita, Ivy Pochada, Amy Stewart, Wendall Thomas



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

Location: Mesa Verde Country Club

3000 Club House Rd, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Registraton: www.ocsistersincrime for Paypal or to print up form.

For additional information: contact Debbie at Mystery Ink, 714 743-6127

The Allure of the Unreliable Narrator

By **Kaira Rouda**

Originally written for Amazon.

We're all unreliable narrators of our personal stories, to some degree, whether we're comfortable admitting it or not. That may be why these fictional characters intrigue many of us on some visceral level. We recognize the impulse. Most of us are on social media these days where we share our filtered and carefully curated version of our lives. The perfect couple. The perfect day. A perfect illusion.

On a more basic level, we tell friends that "everything's fine" when we're hurting or soften the truth about real life for our children. We reserve, perhaps, the most undependable actions for the one we love the most. Romance, in its first blush, is far different than a relationship six months, a year or decades later.

Maybe domestic suspense novels featuring unreliable narrators are so popular because they shine a light on our society's obsession with illusion. We recognize ourselves in the little lies, in the posturing. When we put our best foot forward to flirt with someone we've just met, how different those same words and actions can seem after we've been together for awhile.

Some of my favorite works of fiction feature these alluring unreliable narrators. Consider the book that started the latest phase, *GONE GIRL*, by Gillian Flynn. *GONE GIRL* blew open the domestic suspense and unreliable narrator world with not one, but two, unreliable folks who happen to be married to each other. Nick and Amy were once in love, we think. This twisty tale is one of my favorites. Another current example is *THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN* by Paula Hawkins. Poor Rachel. Our guide in this brilliant story is an alcoholic, unemployed divorcee who commutes into London each day because she doesn't want to admit she's lost her job. That's sad, of course, but what livens up this story is the writing, the descriptions of Rachel's state of mind. We like Rachel, we root for her, even as we are sucked into the horror of what is actually happening.

Classics are filled with unreliable narrators, too, in books and in film. I loved *THE TELL-TALE HEART* by Edgar Allan Poe and *THE LOTTERY* by Shirley Jackson (And, I should add, *A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND* BY FLANNERY O'CONNOR). In film, "The Life of Pi" and "Life is Beautiful" both use the unreliable narrator's escapist visions to mask the reality of their tragic situations, perhaps the only way to survive. In *THE GREAT GATSBY*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald, my all-time favorite, Nick Carroway, tells the reader from page one that he's an objective observer, meaning most likely, he isn't.

Characters with various degrees of unreliability make for wonderful stories. Another recent favorite of mine is *THE DINNER*, by Herman Koch. I feel a kindred spirit with this book because Paul Lohman is unsettling and nasty. (I didn't realize until writing this that our narrators share the same first name. Creepy). You don't like him, but that isn't the point. *THE DINNER'S* Paul is very flawed, and extremely unlikable. The story is built around secrets, and even as you turn the pages, you realize you may not want to know the truth but you just can't stop reading.



Kaira Rouda is a USA Today bestselling multiple award-winning author. Her novels include *Best Day Ever*, *The Goodbye Year*; *Here, Home, Hope*; *All the Difference*; and *In the Mirror*. She is also the author of the bestselling short story *A Mother's Day*, as well as the *Laguna Beach* and *Indigo Island* romance series. Her next novel, *The Favorite Daughter*, is out in May. Kaira lives in Southern California with her family. Connect with her on Facebook at Kaira Rouda Books, and on Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram, @kairarouda. Visit her website at kairarouda.com.

You Oughta Be in Pictures

Writers Police Academy Edition



L - R: **Lee Goldberg**, Melinda Leigh, **Phoef Sutton**, Paul Bishop



Lee Goldberg on the firing range.



Tyler Dilts on the firing range.



Lee Goldberg on the firing range.



L - R: **Tod Goldberg** and **Lee Goldberg** in a shoot-don't-shoot simulation scenario.

Crime
CALENDAR

More to Come!

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

October 7 – [Ladies of Intrigue, Costa Mesa, CA](#)

October 27 – [SoCalMWA Gumbo Party, Los Angeles, CA](#)

November 4 – [Luncheon at the Tam, Los Angeles, CA](#)

The
LAST WORD

“I couldn’t believe they found Brad’s body. I thought I buried him deeper.”

—G.B. Pool, “A Role to Die For”