



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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Gumbo Party!

Saturday, October 27

6 p.m.



The annual SoCalMWA Gumbo Party, graciously hosted once again by Master Chef **Bill Fitzhugh** and his wife Kendall, will be held Saturday, October 27. Join us in Woodland Hills (Los Angeles) for great food, great company, and 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 provided; feel free to BYOB.

[RSVP](#) for address and additional details.

Members and plus-ones only.

Tam Luncheon Cold Case Investigation

Sunday, November 4
Los Angeles

[More info](#)

Send Us Your Cover!

Did you know you can display your latest book cover and your website in our Member Directory, available to all visitors to our chapter webpage? You may add or update your information here: [Your Member Listing](#). Contact info@socalmwa.com if you need a password reminder!

Save the Date!

SoCalMWA/SinCLA Holiday Party

Sunday, December 2
Los Angeles

[More information](#)



The President's Rap Sheet

Glen Erik Hamilton

Early last week, I had the pleasure of turning in the final rewrites on my fourth book. I pressed Send, toasted myself with a second cup of coffee, and later that day, took my wife out for lunch to celebrate both the manuscript and her birthday (efficiency!).

Then the next day came and regular life resumed with a vengeance. Autumn is a busy season for family, for the day job, for MWA (have you renewed *your* membership yet? If not, you've seen my emails...). Plus, the newborn novel was the last on my contract. If I want to keep being a writer, I had best get cracking on the next installment.

So while completing that manuscript was a pleasure, it wasn't a lasting one. My stress level barely dipped at all. Like it couldn't be bothered, anticipating another sprint right around the corner. Fortunately, my family and I had been down this road before. We all noticed the lack of proportion between gotta-hit-this-deadline and gotta-wash-these-dishes. An unhealthy situation for all concerned, including the back molars I was grinding.

The solution? Enforced downshifting. Come home early enough to read PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN with the kid and then segue into a good thriller (unicorns optional). Eat dinner like it's a meal, not simply fuel for the next lap. Re-watch "The Good Place" and "Great British Baking Show," secure in knowing what will happen next. If a task can wait, then say *mañana*.

Downshifting doesn't bring a complete stop to writing. I'm just trying to enjoy the freedom that's available when the next plot, the next challenges, are wide open. That freedom won't last forever. Indulge while I can, that's my new motto.

Speaking of relaxation, our annual Gumbo Party and the final Tam O'Shanter luncheon of 2018 are coming soon! See elsewhere in this newsletter for full details.

Of course it's not always possible for people far from Los Angeles to make the long trip to join us. We want to provide all our members a chance to meet and talk all things authorly. Whether you live in OC or AZ or San D—anywhere in our region, which stretches into Nevada and Hawaii too—if you'd like to help us create a single event or a regular meet-up for members and other interested writers in your area, please contact me at president@socalmwa.com. Our board is here for you.

All Best,
Glen

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Mystery Writers of America
 Southern California Chapter
 3520 Overland Avenue #A-82
 Los Angeles, CA 90034

Contact: info@socalmwa.com
 Website: <http://socalmwa.com>
 Twitter: [@socalmwa](https://twitter.com/socalmwa)

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NATIONAL OFFICE

Mystery Writers of America
 1140 Broadway #1507
 New York, NY 10001
 t. 212.888.8171
 f. 212.888.8107

mwa@mysterywriters.org
<http://mysterywriters.org>



The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

Bouchercon 2018 might be over, but for me, conference season is just ramping up. For several years now, I've served as the registration chair for the California Crime Writers Conference, which will take place June 8–9, 2019 in Culver City. Registration just opened a couple of weeks ago, so I've been busy sending out confirmations and updating our spreadsheet with meal choices and panel requests. Here's a helpful hint if you're planning to go: the vegetarian food option (vegetable wellington) at the last conference was amazing and I think the organizers are planning to offer it again. Fingers crossed.

Along with the California Crime Writers Conference, I'm serving on the Local Organizing Committee for Bouchercon 2020 in Sacramento. This is a new experience for me, but so far, it's been great to get a peek behind the curtain of a much larger operation. I've been attending Bouchercon yearly since 2009 and with the 2020 conference so close by (though I'm still a member of SoCalMWA, I now live in Northern California) I thought it was time to give back to a conference that's given so much to me.

All this is to say that one of the best choices I've made in the last several years is getting involved in the crime fiction community, both as a SoCalMWA and Sisters in Crime member and helping with conferences. The California Crime Writers Conference was the first I ever attended and it's close to my heart. And Bouchercon is where I first met Sue Grafton, my writing hero, among many other authors, some of whom I'm now happy to call friends. When I feel like throwing in the towel, which is more often than I care to admit, I draw from the energy, enthusiasm, and inspiration I get from other authors. Kind of like a vampire but without all the blood.

Speaking of blood, you'll notice a new format to "[Fresh Blood](#)" in this issue (how's that for a segue?). New members are now invited to submit a short bio and headshot so that we can get to know them better. This month's issue also features a short piece by **Jeri Westerson** about [ending a series](#), which also offers some insights into the state of publishing as it pertains to writing a series. The times they are a-changin'.

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)

FRESHBLOOD

SoCalMWA welcomes its new and returning members



Marco Carocari

Marco Carocari is a Swiss photographer, and recently moved to the Palm Springs desert from Zurich. He specializes in architecture, real estate, portrait, and beauty photography and has worked around the globe for twenty-five years. Writing has always been a passion, and he is currently shopping around his manuscript, BLACKOUT, with agents and publishers. He's always looking to improve his writing skills, and joined MWA to learn from the masters, and connect with other writers.

Sean Carswell

Tami Cowden

Nancy Muirhead

Dick Rogers (writing as Chippewa Ferguson)

Dick Rogers is a retired sleuth who served as a lead homicide detective/sergeant with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. He also served with the Alaska State Police during the late fifties and early sixties. He flew the bush in Alaska from 1958 to 1962, and early on he was an air traffic controller with the old CAA (now FAA). He's the author of THE CANYON and six stage plays, one screenplay and a memoir. He comes by his pseudonym, Chippewa Ferguson, honestly.



Sam Rockford

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle gave Sam Rockford an addiction to mysteries which afflicts him still. Born into a military family, he traveled the world and acquired an interest in thrillers as well. Upon seeing many great mystery writers recognized as great thriller writers, his happiness was complete. And now he's making the transition from writing short stories to full novels. By good fortune, he found some new thriller writers who are helping each other get published. If your mysteries have a chilling stab of thriller and this is of any interest to you, feel free to get in touch. (www.samrockford.com)

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.

OVER the TRANSOM

Tom Sawyer has published A MAJOR PRODUCTION!, the second in his series of Barney Moon, P.I. novels. New Yorker Barney Moon never learned to drive, regards Los Angeles as an alien planet, and is again stuck there, encountering new cases of WEBIT? (Where Else But in Tinseltown?). A MAJOR PRODUCTION! (and CROSS PURPOSES—the 1st Barney Moon novel) are available from B&N Press, and Kindle.

Karen Odden's second novel, A DANGEROUS DUET, publishes November 6 from William Morrow. In this Victorian mystery, a determined young pianist stumbles upon the operations of a notorious—and deadly—crime ring while illicitly working in a Soho music hall. Anne Perry said of A DANGEROUS DUET: “Enter the world of a dangerous and teeming city portrayed with vitality and amazing detail.” Susan Elia MacNeal described it as “A captivating tale of mystery, history, and a dash of romance—with an ahead-of-her-time heroine who not only plays the piano with aplomb, but defies Victorian conventions, courts danger, and solves mysteries. Nell Hallam is a heroine to root for.”

Andrew Kaplan's article “Writing HOMELAND or How Being Bipolar in Hollywood is Redundant” appears in the newly-released anthology “HOLLYWOOD vs THE AUTHOR,” published by Rare Bird Books. This new anthology, edited by Stephen Jay Schwartz, features pieces by such well-known authors as Lawrence Sanders, Michael Connelly,

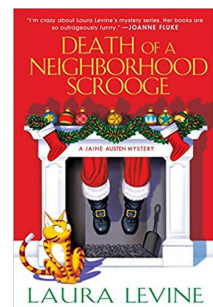
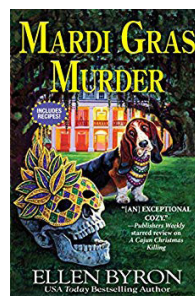
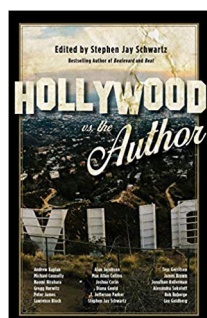
T. Jefferson Parker, Tess Gerritsen, Jonathan Kellerman, **Lee Goldberg**, Gregg Hurwitz, Alan Jacobson, Max Allen Collins, Andrew Kaplan, etc. This is a MUST READ for anyone interested in writing for Hollywood or in writers and Hollywood - and what really goes on behind the scene.

MARDI GRAS MURDER, the 4th book in **Ellen Byron's** award-winning Cajun Country Mystery series, launches on October 9th. *Laissez les bon temps rouler!*

DEATH OF A NEIGHBORHOOD SCROOGE, the sixteenth book in **Laura Levine's** Jane Austen mystery series, is now out from Kensington Books. (Starred review in *Publishers Weekly*.)

Craig Faustus Buck's noir short story, “Race to Judgment,” a twisted tale of Mississippi politics, love, betrayal and murder in the age of fake news, is featured in the November–December issue of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*.

The You-Solve-It whodunit “Treasure Cave” by **Peter DiChellis** appears in the current issue of *Mystery Weekly Magazine*. Additionally, Peter's crime-horror tale “Dead Ringer” appears in the latest issue of cross-genre magazine *Kzine* and his horror-suspense story “Disaster Adjuster” was reprinted in the new issue of *The Literary Hatchet*.



OVER the TRANSOM

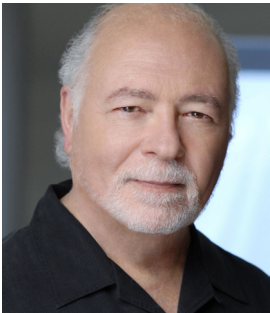
Pamela Asbury-Smith has been notified of more foreign sales of her novel, PHANTOM AT HONOLULU HARBOR, bringing the total to nine foreign countries her English-language book has sold. The latest is France, where she discovered it's selling on Amazon for over \$38. In addition to the USA and France, the novel is now in Canada, Mexico, Germany, Wales, England, Finland, and Japan. The sales in Japan might be owing to the love the Japanese have for Hawaii, and many are bi-lingual. She's working on a sequel set in Waikiki, another archaeological mystery with Hawaiian legend.

Member APPEARANCES

D.P. Lyle will appear at the following locations in October:

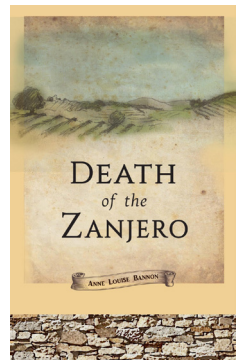
Thursday, October 25, 7 p.m.
Signing with Hank Phillippi Ryan and Charlene Harris
Mysterious Galaxy, San Diego
5942 Balboa Ave. #100
San Diego, CA
858-268-4747
<https://www.mystgalaxy.com>

October 26–28
La Jolla Writer's Conference
Hyatt Regency La Jolla at Aventine
3777 La Jolla Village Dr.
San Diego, CA
<http://lajollawritersconference.com>



Andrew Kaplan will give a featured presentation to the Palm Springs Writers Guild titled “How I Ran Away to the French Riviera and Wrote a *NY Times* Bestseller” at the Rancho Mirage Public Library on Saturday, October 6 from 2–4 p.m. In addition, Andrew will give an all-day workshop at the Palm Springs Riviera Resort on Monday, October 8, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The morning session's topic will be: “Seven Elements That Can Turn Your Book into a Bestseller.” The afternoon session's topic is: “Creating Immediately Compelling Characters.”

Anne Louise Bannon will be signing her latest novel *Death of the Zanjero* at the Art Night Author Fair, Pasadena Public Library, 285 E. Walnut St., Pasadena, from 6–10 p.m. Come out and visit with her and a host of other local authors.



Member APPEARANCES

Connie di Marco will appear at the following locations in October:

Wednesday, October 24, 6 p.m.

Trivia Night for Mystery Lovers

Studio City Library

12511 Moorpark St., Studio City, CA 91604

Featuring **Ellen Byron**, Pamela duMond, Sylvie Fox,

Glen Erik Hamilton, **Paul D. Marks**,

Nancy Cole Silverman, and **Phoef Sutton**.

Hosted by Kemper Donovan and Catherine Brobeck

from the “All About Agatha” podcast.

<https://www.lapl.org>

Saturday, October 27, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

(Appearing with **Paul D. Marks**)

Mystery Author Luncheon at the Acton/Agua Dulce Library

33792 Crown Valley Road, Acton, CA 939510

Sarah M. Chen will be on a mystery/thriller panel at the Corona Public Library for their 6th Annual Author Luncheon along with **Ivy Pochoda**, Anthony J. Tata, Christopher Swann, **Paddy Hirsch**, and **Craig Faustus Buck** as moderator. The event is Saturday, October 20 at noon. For tickets: <http://www.friendsofthecoronapubliclibrary.com>

MIKE BEFELER



Mike Befeler's mystery novel, UNSTUFF YOUR STUFF, can now be ordered. Mike will be signing and presenting at Gatsby Books, 5535 E. Spring St., Long Beach on Sunday, October 21, at 3 p.m. 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.

Jeri Westerson is on tour for her paranormal romance, DEADLY RISING, in her Booke of the Hidden series. Catch her at the following locations:

* Saturday, October 13, 3–4 p.m., Long Beach Library for spooky fun.

* Saturday, October 20, noon author panel, El Segundo Author's Fair at the El Segundo Library

* Tuesday, October 23, 1–3 p.m., Facebook Virtual Launch—fun, prizes, presentation

* Sunday, October 28, 2 p.m., Mysterious Galaxy, spooky fun, raffle, treats

* Monday, October 29, 7 p.m., Yorba Linda Library, author panel

See all the details of the continuing tour at BOOKEoftheHIDDEN.com

Member APPEARANCES

Sheila Lowe will be speaking in her old stomping grounds, Orange County, on October 11 at the OC Historical Society. Along with her new book, *READING BETWEEN THE LINES, DECODING HANDWRITING*, she will be talking about her Forensic Handwriting Mysteries. Open to the public.

Christina Hoag will be reading and discussing her novel *SKIN OF TATTOOS* at Lit Up OC on Oct. 23 at Bardot Bars and Coffee, Tustin, 662 El Camino Real, at 7 p.m.



join us

PRE-LAUNCH CELEBRATION
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 3PM
THE PUPPET MASTER
A BROOKS/LOTELLO THRILLER
RONALD S. BARAK

DIESEL, A BOOK STORE
BRENTWOOD COUNTRY MART
225 26TH ST, #33, SOUTH COURTYARD
SANTA MONICA, CA 90402

Ronald S. Barak invites you to the pre-launch celebration of his latest book, *THE PUPPET MASTER*. Sunday, October 14 at 3 p.m. at Diesel, A Bookstore in the Brentwood Country Mart, 225 26th Street #33, South Courtyard, Santa Monica. Please RSVP to ron@ronaldsbarak.com.

Lawrence Maddox will be signing *FAST BANG BOOZE* (Shotgun Honey, 2018) at Pasadena's Art Night on Friday, October 12, 6 p.m., at the Pasadena Central Library.



Featuring co-host **S.W. Lauden** and interviews with **Matt Goldman, Jordan Harper, Wendall Thomas, Nadine Nettmann, Anne Louise Bannon**, and many more.

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

October 26–28, 2018 | PASADENA, CA

WD WRITER'S DIGEST
**NOVEL WRITING
CONFERENCE**

Three days of learning, four tracks to explore and innumerable opportunities to learn how to produce a tightly crafted novel compelling to agents, editors and readers—all backed by nearly 100 years of experience.

Featuring these New York Times bestselling authors:

Opening Keynote

ROBERT CRAIS



Central Keynote

CURTIS SITTENFELD



Closing Keynote

NICOLA YOON



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SINC/LA AND MWA SOCAL PRESENT

*One Killer Holiday
Party*
The Sequel!

**FOOD · WINE · DESSERT
FORTUNE TELLER · PRIZES**

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.

December 2, 2018

11:30 am to 2 pm

**SOUTH PASADENA LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM
1115 EL CENTRO STREET
SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030**



On Ending a Series

By **Jeri Westerson**

I have two long-ish series. One ended and another will be coming to an end soon. It's tough to say good-bye to your characters, to not live in that world with them anymore. But a series is an ever-changing challenge in today's industry with a crowd of both good and bad self-published books competing for your reader dollars.

The series that ended was my Skyler Foxe LGBT mystery series. I was taking a chance with this story I wanted to tell. Let's face it, LGBT books are small potatoes in the industry, and getting smaller. I found a LGBT publisher without my agent and wrote six books and self-published three novellas in the series. For what it was, it offered me only decent royalties, while the audiobooks were almost more popular.

After the sixth book, I intended to write more, but looking at the work output to financial ratio, it seemed like the natural place to end it. I have no plans to write more LGBT genre books, but I continue to have LGBT characters in my series, both medieval and paranormal, because that's real life.

I always planned an end point for my Crispin Guest Medieval Noir series. But I've cut the number of books I intended to write from 19 to 15. It used to be the expectation more books and a backlist drove sales higher. It simply isn't the case anymore. I know there are readers and writers with plenty of examples that prove the opposite, but many of those series began more than twenty years ago when there might have been more backing by their publishers, where there were many more bookstores than there are today, when the competition for a reader's time and dollars was far less than it is now.

I discussed this with my agent, in fact. They didn't want me to write more than *three* books in any new series. It was hard to imagine devoting that much time and effort on only three books. There's a lot of emotional investment in these characters. Though, it doesn't mean if the books have some kind of modest success that you can't write spin-offs or another trilogy, but it was tough to wrap my mind around it.

Midlist authors like me find it impossible to make a living, even with 26 books in print. I'll be very sad when I finally end the Crispin series. It's been going on for eleven years and I've been with him through thick and thin. I always knew how his story will end. Yes, it will be sad but also somewhat of a relief. For all the effort I expend researching and writing a historical, it doesn't offer enough remuneration for what I put into it. So I'm moving on to a different genre.

I've been writing a paranormal series. I'm really enjoying the freedom of writing them, getting back to a genre I enjoyed reading in my college days. My first published paranormal series was a planned six books, but again my agent suggested three. I pared it down to four. But in this case, I got ideas for two spin-off series of three books each. So as adamant as I was that I "simply couldn't write more from this series when it was *done*"...well, let's say crow isn't too bad barbecued. Writing these books gives me good practice for changing the way I work, and that's been the most enlightening of this experience.



Jeri Westerson is the author of the Crispin Guest Medieval Mysteries, a series nominated for 13 national awards from the Agatha to the Shamus. Of her debut paranormal fantasy series, *BOOKE OF THE HIDDEN*, *Romantic Times* said, "BOOKE OF THE HIDDEN is paranormal romance perfection...Jeri Westerson is flawless in this tale of adventure, mystery and saucy romance." The next in the series, *DEADLY RISING*, releases October 23. Jeri is twice former president of SoCalMWA and OC Sisters in Crime, and former vice president of Sisters in Crime Los Angeles. For her LGBT series see SkylerFoxeMysteries.com, for medieval mysteries see JeriWesterson.com, and for paranormals go to BookeoftheHidden.com.

Crime CALENDAR



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. Despite a thorough investigation no suspect was arrested and the case remained open, unsolved for 23 years.

In 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.](#)

More to Come!

- 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](#)
- December 2 – [SoCalMWA/SinCLA Joint Holiday Party, Los Angeles, CA](#)

The LAST WORD

“Mas Arai was worried that the customs officer at Kansai Airport would find his best friend, Haruo Mukai, inside his suitcase.”

—Naomi Hirahara, HIROSHIMA BOY