

March 2020



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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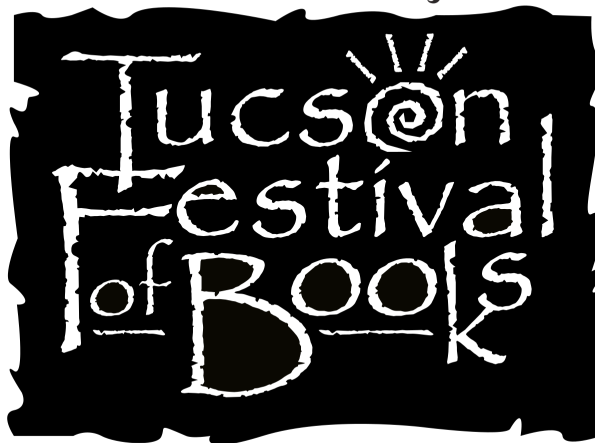
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Arizona Daily Star



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

University of Arizona Campus

March 14–15, 2020

9:30am to 5:30pm

Los Angeles Times Festival of Books Stories & Ideas

April 18–19
University of Southern
California

[More info](#)

Help Needed!

Debbie Mitsch, our LATFOB bookseller, needs help setting up the booth on Friday, April 17. Contact president@socalmwa.com if you're available.

SoCalMWA is delighted to be hosting a booth at the Tucson Festival of Books. This year's festival will take place on Saturday, March 14 and Sunday, March 15, and all MWA members, regardless of chapter affiliation, are invited to join us to sign and sell books to the more than 100,000 readers who are expected to attend. This is a fantastic opportunity to increase your visibility, expand your readership, and meet your fellow MWA members.

If you would like to participate, there are multiple slots available on both days. Please [email Fred Andersen](#) to schedule a slot.

Note that we will be obtaining a Tucson business license so that members can sell their books directly from the booth.

Please also be in touch with Fred if you would like to volunteer for setup, tear-down, or general booth management. Any additional help would be more than welcome.

There are a limited number of slots available, so [sign up today!](#)



The President's Rap Sheet

Jessica Kaye

It's March already, the last month of the first quarter of the year. The whole *tempus fugit* thing is befuddling but it does bring us to our springtime events.

This month presents both Left Coast Crime (LCC) and the Tucson Festival of Books. Some of you will be at one or the other but not both, as they are at the same time this year. Still, each offers a venue for mingling with fellow authors, with readers, with opportunities for learning.

LCC is honoring three of our own! **Rachel Howzell Hall**, also currently a member of the SoCalMWA Board of Directors and **T. Jefferson Parker** are both LCC Guests of Honor, and **Matt Coyle** is Toastmaster. Congratulations to you all!

SoCalMWA is cohosting a cocktail party at LCC open to all MWA members and whomever you wish to bring with you. It's on Thursday, March 12 from 8-9. Our co-hosts are MWA NorCal and MWA Northwest. It's scheduled to be held outdoors on the West Lawn, immediately following the LCC Opening Reception at the same location. In the event of inclement weather, the events will be held indoors, location TBA. All MWA members will receive a free drink ticket; a cash bar will be available for non-MWA guests and for anyone wishing more than one drink. Please note there will not be food at this event, so plan on dinner beforehand or afterward.

This will be my first LCC, and I have heard from a number of folks that it is a wonderful conference. Feel free to send along any helpful hints. On the afternoon of Saturday, March 14, from 4-4:45 in Rio Vista F-H, you can find me moderating a panel about audiobooks.

Sleuthfest in Florida is also happening this month, from March 26-29. Our fellow Florida MWA Chapter has passed along that all MWA members receive a discounted registration rate. If interested, sign up at sleuthfest.com. Their guest of honor is Catriona McPherson, the forensic guest of honor is Dr. Lawrence Simon and their faculty includes Frankie Y. Bailey, Richie Narvaez and Alex Segura, all current or former chapter and national MWA board members and members of Crime Writers of Color.

That's a busy March.

Until next month,

Jessica Kaye

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

It's too early in the year for me to start talking about how quickly it's passing by.

And yet...

It's already March!!!

Now that I've got that out of my system, I can move on to some of the things I'm looking forward to this month. I've got a novella coming out on March 1. It's funny how you wait months, or even years, for a book to be released then all of a sudden it's here and you wonder how it managed to sneak up on you.

In a couple of weeks, I'll be attending Left Coast Crime in San Diego. Since the weather here in Northern California has been unseasonably warm—with no rain to speak of in several weeks—I can't say it's the sun I'm craving. Mostly, I'm looking forward to seeing many of you, and celebrating our members who are being honored at the conference this year, whether as special guests or award nominees.

If you're attending LCC, I'll be spending most of my time at the Bouchercon 2020 table taking registrations. Please stop by! Or, if you'd rather, I'll be on "The Soundtrack of Crime" on Friday at 2:45 p.m. and I'll be moderating "Let's Talk About Sex (in Mysteries)" on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. Rumor has it I'll also be singing something at the Author Cabaret on Friday night—it should be a good time! I'd tell you what song it is but *my lips are sealed*. Finally, I'll be hosting a banquet table with the fabulous Hilary Davidson on Saturday night. Sign-ups at registration.

Have a great month, and I hope to see you soon!

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 the SoCalMWA
Discussion Group**

groups.io/g/MWA-SOCAL
(members only)

NATIONAL OFFICE

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f. 212.888.8107

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

**2021 California Crime Writers Conference
Volunteers Needed!**

Have you wanted to get more involved with SoCalMWA? Here's an opportunity! We need volunteers to work on the 2021 California Crime Writers Conference and we need to start planning it now. This biennial event is co-planned with SinCLA, so expertise and helping hands will come from both organizations. Please email Jessica Kaye at president@socalmwa.com if you are interested in being part of putting on this wonderful conference.

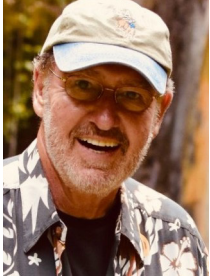
FRESHBLOOD

SoCalMWA welcomes its new members

Kerry Cole

Laurie Finkelstein

Raymond Paul Johnson



Raymond Paul Johnson lives in Manhattan Beach, California and is writing his first legal thriller. He is married with one adult child, a miniature golden retriever, and four rescue cats. He is also a lawyer, engineer, combat veteran and former USAF pilot. In addition, Ray is principal co-author of *DEFACTIVE PRODUCT: EVIDENCE TO VERDICT*, a legal treatise published by Juris Publishing, author of more than 50 legal articles published in law journals and nationally circulated periodicals, and has served as legal consultant to the *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times*. His hobbies include travelling, boating and sports cars.

Vince Thompson



Vince Thompson wrote screenplays before working in the television business and going on to lead national sales teams for AOL and Facebook. He's worked as a CEO, public company board member, TV host, and served as a consultant to over fifty media and entertainment companies. In 2008, *FT Press* published his debut business book, *IGNITED*. He's currently working on his first novel where he's hoping to combine murder and mystery, while examining the ethics of business. More about Vince at www.vincethompson.co.

Heidi Vanderbilt



*Left Coast Crime
San Diego
March 12-15, 2020*

Left Coast Crime is currently accepting registrations for its 30th anniversary conference to be held in the Marriott Mission Valley (easy to reach by train, with a trolley stop at the back of hotel).

700 mystery fans and authors will meet and discuss books. Remember the debut author breakfast, author speed dating, and other opportunities to network.

More info at <http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2020/>.
Contact Kim.lcc2020@gmail.com with any questions.

OVER the TRANSOM

Set in the Roaring 20s **THE ICE TEMPLE OF HARLEM** by **Gary Phillips** re-imagines real life North Pole explorer Matthew Henson in the pulp tradition of Indiana Jones. Dutch Schultz, numbers boss Queenie St. Clair, Bessie Coleman, the nation's first black aviatrix, and electrical wizard Nikola Tesla all figure in a yarn wherein Henson races against the clock to save lives and keep a mysterious and powerful meteor fragment he brought back from the Arctic out of the hands of malevolent forces. Henson must prevail so he can return to the frozen north and reunite with his teenage son. Out February 25 from Agora.

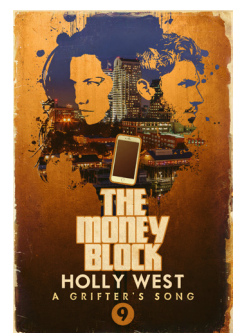
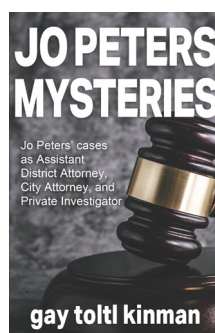
Patrick Coleman's **THE CHURCHGOER** is the inspiration for a potential TV series at FX. "True Detective" collaborators Matthew McConaughey and Nic Pizzolatto will partner on "The Redeemer," based on Coleman's debut novel, in which a former minister turned dissolute security guard's search for a missing woman leads him through a criminal conspiracy, as his past and present collide around a mystery of violence and deceit. FX Productions and Fox 21 will produce.

Gay Tolt Kinman's **JO PETERS MYSTERIES** is a collection of short stories, a play, and the first few chapters of two books—all featuring Jo Peters, who started her career as a Los Angeles County Assistant District Attorney, burned out, worked as a City Attorney in her hometown, and then became a P.I. because she loves investigating.

Jeri Westerson releases the first in her werewolf mystery series, **MOONRISERS**. Jeff Chase is a guy with a werewolf problem. All he wants is to go back to his life as a surfer and a player. But that's not going to happen when there's a dangerous surf gang, a Voodoo coven, a werewolf pack...and murder. [Related appearances.](#)

Tori Eldridge, author of **THE NINJA DAUGHTER**, is nominated for a Lefty Award for Best Debut Mystery Novel. Additionally, *The Washington Independent Review of Books* recently did a feature interview on Tori and her book: ["The Sword of Justice—Cheering for Tori Eldridge's Unlikely Ninja Hero."](#)

Holly West's novella, **THE MONEY BLOCK**, is out now from Down & Out Books: When longtime grifters Sam and Rachel lure a cocky businessman into investing in their fake cryptocurrency and he gets wise to the con, they run a high-tech—and high-stakes—race for their lives, and this time, they might not win.



OVER the TRANSOM

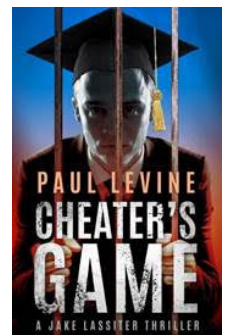
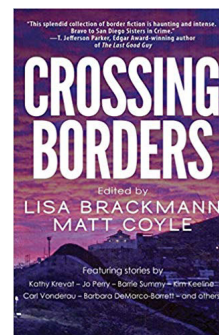
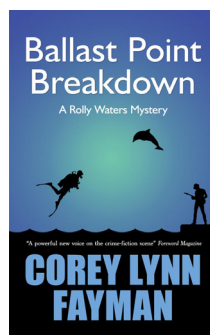
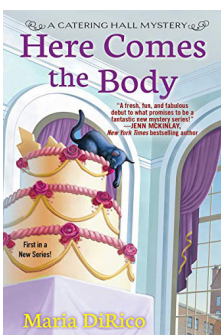
HERE COMES THE BODY, the first book in the Catering Hall Mysteries, officially released on February 25. **Ellen Byron** is writing the series under the pen name Maria DiRico—her Italian grandmother’s maiden name.

BALLAST POINT BREAKDOWN, the fourth installment in **Corey Lynn Fayman’s** mystery series featuring guitar-playing private eye Rolly Waters will be published March 1 by Konstellation Press. Additionally, DESERT CITY DIVA—THE PODCAST, a radio-play podcast adaptation of Corey’s novel is now online at desertcitydiva.com. You can also find it on all the podcast networks, including Apple, Google Play, iHeart, Pandora, TuneIn and Spotify. Four half-hour episodes. And it’s free.

Judith Gonda’s first book in her debut mystery series featuring California landscape architect Tory Benning, MURDER IN THE SECRET MAZE (Beyond the Page Publishing), was released February 26.

Melinda Loomis’s short story “Like Deja vu All Over Again” is included in the anthology CROSSING BORDERS, which was published in February and will receive its official launch at Left Coast Crime in San Diego in March. The anthology was published by Down & Out Books.

CHEATER’S GAME, the 14th legal thriller in **Paul Levine’s** “Jake Lassiter” series, will be published in April on the 30th anniversary of TO SPEAK FOR THE DEAD, first in the series. Suffering symptoms of brain damage from his football days, an ailing and heartbroken Lassiter must defend his brilliant nephew Kip, who’s being paid big bucks to take SAT exams for children of wealthy parents. Kip is clearly guilty, but Lassiter employs a novel defense that rocks the courthouse. Available for pre-order now.



Member APPEARANCES

Tori Eldridge, author of *THE NINJA DAUGHTER*, will be making the following appearances: March 12–15, Left Coast Crime (see conference program for her complete schedule), San Diego; March 21 at 2 p.m. with **Jennifer Chow** (*MIMI LEE GETS A CLUE*) at Book Carnival, 348 South Tustin Street, Orange; and March 29 at Noir at the Bar at the Mandrake, 2692 La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles.

Jeri Westerson is launching her first werewolf mystery, *MOONRISERS* at several locations: March 8, 3 p.m.—Pre-launch with refreshments and a free raffle at Thousand Oaks Library, 1401 E. Janss Rd., Thousand Oaks; March 14, 2 p.m., Beach! Books! Beer! and giveaways at Four Sons Brewing, 18421 Gothard St Suite 100, Huntington Beach; March 28, 2 p.m., snacks, free raffle, and fun conversation, with **Laurie Stevens** (*IN TWIGHLIGHT'S HUSH*, marking the fourth book in her Gabriel McRay series) at Book Carnival Bookstore, 348 S Tustin St., Orange.

Mike Befeler will be moderating the Meet the New Authors Breakfast on Friday morning and on the panel Writing Older Characters Friday afternoon at the Left Coast Crime Conference in San Diego (March 12–15).

Ellen Byron, along with **Wendall Thomas**, Leslie Karst, Cynthia Kuhn, and Catriona McPherson will be on the Best Humorous Mystery panel at Left Coast Crime, where she'll share about her nominated book, *FATAL CAJUN FESTIVAL*. The panel will take place at 10:15 a.m. on Friday. She'll also be on the 9 a.m. Saturday panel, "Fiction Writers are Professional Liars: But can they do it to your face?" The panels are early. Bring coffee!



Lee Goldberg (L) and Matt Coyle

Lee Goldberg launched his new novel *LOST HILLS* with a talk at the Calabasas Public Library (in conversation with Emmy award winning writer/producer Ken Levine) and followed with signings through SoCal, including Mysterious Galaxy (with **Matt Coyle**) and the Queen Mary (with **Attica Locke**) and across the country, where he met up with **Thomas Perry** and Gregg Hurwitz for the inaugural Crime Scene Bookfest at McIntyre's Bookstore in Pittsboro, NC.

At the 2020 Tucson Festival of Books, **Susan Cummins Miller** will interview Edgar Award-winner C. J. Box in Koffler Room 218, University of Arizona, 1–2 p.m. From 11 a.m.–12 noon, Susan will be signing at the SoCalMWA booth. All Festival events are free and open to the public. For more information, please visit TucsonFestivalofBooks.org.

Member APPEARANCES

Sheila Lowe will speak at the Madonna Inn on March 7 to the Central Coast chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma. She will demonstrate how her character, Claudia Rose, analyzes the handwriting of victims and suspects in her Forensic Handwriting series. She'll also introduce **PROOF OF LIFE**, from her new Beyond the Veil Mysteries. At Left Coast Crime, Sheila will join **Dennis Palumbo** and other panelists on Saturday at 4 p.m., discussing the "Psychology of Crime."



Sheila Lowe appeared at the Ventura County Professional Women's Expo in February.

NOIR AT THE BAR L.A.
MARCH 29 7PM

JAMES QUEALLY **TORI ELDRIDGE**
ELIZABETH LITTLE **ROLAND S JEFFERSON**
STEVE DEJARNATT **DENNIS PALUMBO**

MANDRAKE 2692 S. LA CIENEGA

 A black and white photograph of a man in a black hat and dark jacket, holding a handgun in his right hand, pointing it towards the camera. The background is dark and moody.

February Tam Luncheon was on fire!

Forensic arson investigator John Lentini captivated the luncheon attendees at our first event of 2020 at the Tam O'Shanter in Los Feliz. Mr. Lentini walked us through the details of two cases in which he served as expert witness for the defense and debunked the prosecution's claims of arson. He provided compelling photographs to illustrate his conclusions that the investigators in both cases had used bad science or worse, no science at all, in charging defendants with the crime of deliberately setting fires. His folksy demeanor brought pathos to the plight of the unjustly accused.



Lentini's work with The Innocence Project, as well as with other defense counsel, is renowned in his field and he helped establish new standards for pinpointing sources of fires. You may have seen him on TV on *20/20*, or in the film "Incendiary," discussing the Willingham case, in which Cameron Todd Willingham was accused of killing his wife and children in a fire the prosecutors claimed was arson. Willingham was given the death penalty, a sentence which was carried out before Lentini provided the expertise to posthumously exonerate him.

For more details about Lentini's work, his website is www.firescientist.com. His book, SCIENTIFIC PROTOCOLS FOR FIRE INVESTIGATION is in its third edition.

Kauai Writers Conference

SoCalMWA members will receive a discount to the Kauai Writers Conference in November, 2020. Enter code WG789 when registering at kauaiwritersconference.com.

Crime CALENDAR

March 12–15 – [Left Coast Crime, San Diego, CA](#)
March 14–15 – [Tucson Festival of Books, Tucson, AZ](#)
March 26–29 – [Sleuthfest, Deerfield Beach, FL](#)
April 18–19 – [LA Times Festival of Books, Los Angeles, CA](#)
April 30 – [Edgar Awards, New York, NY](#)
May 1–3 – [Malice Domestic 32, Bethesda, MD](#)
July 7–11 – [ThrillerFest, New York, NY](#)
October 15–18 – [Bouchercon, Sacramento, CA](#)

Stay tuned for more great events in 2020!

The LAST WORD

“I measure my days by the number of homicidal thoughts I have.
I only had two today. So it must’ve been good.”

—Lida Sideris, MURDER & OTHER UNNATURAL DISASTERS