



The  
MARCH

of CRIME

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## Los Angeles Times Festival of Books Stories & Ideas

—POSTPONED—

October 3–4  
University of  
Southern California

[More info](#)



## Mystery Writers of America

### A Letter From the National Board

Dear Members:

Everyone here at Mystery Writers of America hopes this finds you and your loved ones well, healthy and safe.

We find ourselves in uncharted waters, both as an organization and as fellow authors. How do we get through a time of such incredible uncertainty? The economic fallout from this pandemic is only beginning, and we have yet to see what effect this will have on the future of our genre and our business. What will happen to the bookstores, the libraries, the small presses, and even the Big 5 publishers? How will this impact our future work? How, with everything changing on an almost daily basis, can we reach our readers? Where and how can readers find our work, get it into their hands? Will people buy books in an economically challenging time?

We had to take the unprecedented step of canceling both the Edgar symposium and banquet. We are looking into ways to hold the symposium online, and then archive each panel to be viewed later, whenever you please. We are still exploring options for presenting the awards, announcing the winners, and celebrating all the finalists.

Our chapters are looking into holding virtual meetings. Newsletters will still be produced and will still be sent out. We are still diligently working on behalf of our members to continue to vet publishers, come up with new member benefits, and figuring out how best we can serve you. We want to be sure we are here for you for both resources and support, whenever you need us.

This is our 75th year and we are determined to see another 75.

In the meantime, please do everything you can to ensure your safety and that of those you love. We look forward to getting through this difficult time together with you.

**Meg Gardiner**, President

**Greg Herren**, Executive Vice President



## The President's Rap Sheet

*Jessica Kaye*

This column was difficult for me to write because it is hard to stay relevant when there is so much happening around us.

As you know, pretty much all events for the mystery community have been canceled, and most of us are home almost all of the time, save for a walk or some other outdoor exercise, and trips to the grocery store or pharmacy. I imagine few, if any of us anticipated our lifetimes would include a pandemic.

On to things we CAN do.

Sleuthfest has an [online auction](#) in lieu of their usual gathering. The prizes include manuscript critiques, conversations with editors, having a character named after you or your designee (think gift for Mother's Day or Father's Day) a personalized forensic Q&A with Sharon Plotkin.

Here at home, without the LA Times Festival of Books, April is looking like a time to hunker down and read or write the book, article, journal entry, of your choice. My writers group is planning a virtual meeting, so that we not only have company but keep on track or just chat and eat, as we usually do, but this time it is BYOS—bring your own snacks.

If you'd like to see what other homebound folks are seeing, there is a heartwarming Facebook group called View From My Window. People the world over are posting photographs and it is a chance to armchair travel. I find it restful and upbeat and who couldn't use a little of both of those things?

You may want to join or check in with your Next Door group. For those unfamiliar with it, [nextdoor.com](#) is a listserv made up of people in your geographic area. It can need curating because sometimes conversations get testy or absurd but right now it is also full of people listing ways they can help others or a place for those who need help to ask for it.

Most importantly, if you want to reach out to someone for conversation or advice or just to know there is another heartbeat connected via Skype or phone or Zoom or Facetime, do it. If you need someone to talk to, please feel free to email me and we can set a time to chat. If others wish to volunteer their time, please let me know and we can update the website with that information or else you will find it in an email blast or next month's newsletter, if May finds us still homebound.

Until next month, be safe, be well.

Jessica Kaye

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

Like so many of you, my husband and I have been hunkered down in our Northern California home since March 13. I'll admit there are far worse ways to weather a crisis.

I've been fortunate to work from home for over twenty years, holding a variety of jobs, mostly creative. Likewise, my husband has worked from home for ten years, so we're accustomed to co-existing in the same space for much of the day. Beyond that, we don't have children, get along well, and enjoy spending time together. In so many ways, my quarantine looks a lot like normal life.

More importantly, we, our families, and close friends are healthy and financially stable. We're all sheltering-in-place and connecting as much as we can online.

Why then, am I battling depression and grief as though I've lost far more than I actually have? I suspect it's because the key thing I haven't lost are those internal things that make me "me," and, in turn, make me human. Pandemic or not, I don't react well to uncertainty, and anxiety is usually just a heartbeat away in even the best of circumstances. Any expectation that pre-pandemic Holly was going to respond well to this was, at the very least, optimistic.

I know I'm not alone in feeling this way. To varying degrees, we've all suffered big losses in recent weeks, both personally and globally, but we haven't lost what makes us human, what makes us "us," which makes coming to terms with what's happening right now especially difficult. More than that, we can't come together physically during this time when so many people are suffering and we feel powerless to ease that suffering by doing little more than staying home.

Our humanity is at once our greatest strength and greatest weakness, but ultimately we'll adapt, find new ways to help others and to create a new normal. The fact that I had a Zoom meetup yesterday with my 90-year-old grandma who previously refused to even own a cell phone proves that.

As Jessica said above—you have my [email address](#), reach out if you need to and we'll talk. I'll be editing the newsletter as usual so if you have an idea for content that's a little outside the box but appropriate for this strange time, feel free to pitch it.

Above all, be kind to yourself, stay safe, and *stay home*. To caregivers and other workers who can't stay home, we see you and we appreciate you.

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.

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**Join the SoCalMWA  
Discussion Group**

[groups.io/g/MWA-SOCAL](https://groups.io/g/MWA-SOCAL)  
(members only)

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## OVER the TRANSOM

**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.

**Jeri Westerson's** thirteenth Crispin Guest Medieval Noir, **SWORD OF SHADOWS**, releases April 7 from Severn House.

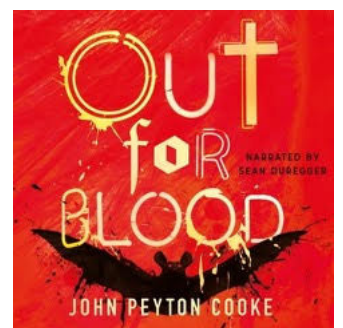
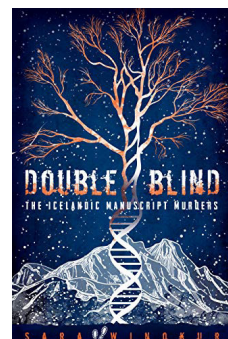
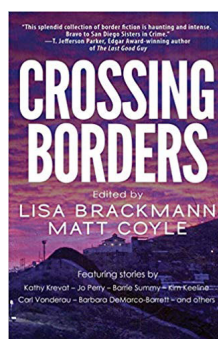
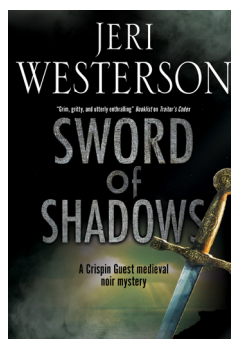
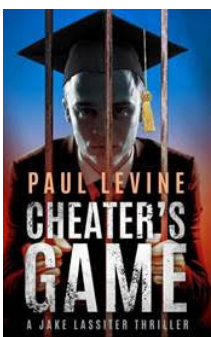
**Barbara DeMarco-Barrett's** short story, "Pool Fishing," is included in **CROSSING BORDERS**, an anthology just published by Down and Out Books, edited by **Lisa Brackmann** and **Matt Coyle**.

**Sara Winokur's** **DOUBLE BLIND: THE ICELANDIC MANUSCRIPT MURDERS** was released March 31 (Anchor House). A young boy disappears in the chill of North Iceland. Twenty years later, a mysterious poem lands on the desk of his twin sister Brynja Pálsdóttir, a forensic geneticist. He's alive...or is he? "A riveting mystery tale with a compelling lead character." —*Kirkus Reviews*

**RIGGED**, **DP Lyle's** next Jake Longly comedic thriller will be out on May 19. Additionally, **SUNSHINE STATE**, Jake Longly #3, will be released in paperback on May 12. [More info here.](#)

The audiobook of **John Peyton Cooke's** vampire thriller **OUT FOR BLOOD** was just issued by Valancourt Books, narrated by Sean Durreger.

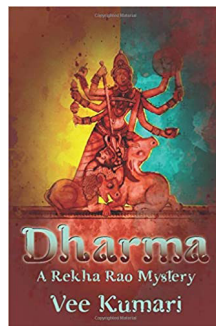
**Vanessa A. Ryan** recently signed a two-book deal with Danish publisher Forlaget Mellempgaard ApS, negotiated by Tiziana Marzano at TM Literary Agency.



## OVER the TRANSOM

**Vee Kumari** recently released her debut novel DHARMA, a Rekha Rao Mystery, on [Amazon as a paperback and Kindle eBook](#). DHARMA tells the story of An Indian American professor of Art History, who is propelled by her sense of duty, dharma, to find the killer of her mentor and father figure. Walking a thin line between her match-making family and a homicide detective she is attracted to, but distrusts, she tracks down the killer, tastes the prospect of an unexpected romance, and discovers her true calling.

Written under the pen name Elle Brooke White, **Christine E. Blum's** new series, The Finn Farm Mysteries makes its debut on April 7. The first installment, DEAD ON THE VINE, a whimsical story of farm life in Santa Barbara, has been well received: "The human-porcine-insect trio attacks the case with a gusto and expertise that would make mere cat sleuths blush with envy." —*Kirkus Reviews*



## Member APPEARANCES

**DP Lyle** will appear at the following events in May (check websites for possible cancellations of in-person events): Thursday, May 14, 5 p.m. PST—Thorne and Cross: Haunted Nights LIVE! Interview, Authors on the Air Network. Saturday, May 16, 3 p.m.—RIGGED Launch Party, Mystery Ink, 8907 Warner Ave. #135, Huntington Beach, CA ([mysteryink.com](http://mysteryink.com)). Tuesday, May 19, 7 p.m.—Lit Up! OC: Reading from RIGGED and Q&A, Bardot Bars & Coffee, 662 El Camino Real, Tustin, CA ([facebook.com/litupoc](https://www.facebook.com/litupoc)).

**Paul D. Marks** is interviewed by Frank Zafiro on the Wrong Place-Write Crime podcast on April 15. So after you're done crying about your taxes, please check it out: <http://www.frankzafiro.com/wrong-place-write-crime/>.

## Crime CALENDAR

July 7–11 – [ThrillerFest, New York, NY](#)

September 10–13 – [Noir Con, Los Angeles, CA](#)

October 3–4 – [Los Angeles Times Festival of Books, Los Angeles, CA](#)

October 15–18 – [Bouchercon, Sacramento, CA](#)

### *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](mailto:president@socalmwa.com) if you are interested in being part of putting on this wonderful conference.

## The LAST WORD

“She knew her father well. He was telling the truth when he said he didn’t know the woman. But he was also hiding something. And it was never good when a Carina hid something.”

—Maria DiRico, *HERE COMES THE BODY*