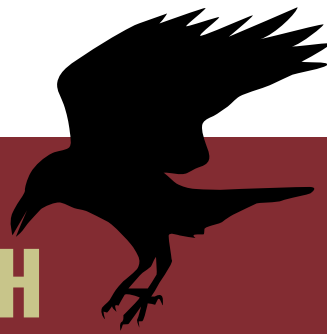


MARCH 2024

THE MARCH OF CRIME

SoCalMWA's monthly newsletter.



Special Announcement

BY ONA RUSSELL



I regret to say that I have stepped down as chapter president. Unforeseen familial obligations would have prevented me from serving members effectively, and so I made the difficult decision to hand over the reins. You are in good hands, though, and I hope to continue to work for the organization in whatever way I can.

All the best,
Ona

*EDITOR'S NOTE: **Leslie S. Klinger** has been elected SoCalMWA's new president. I'd like to wish Ona all the best going forward. Thank you to **Travis Richardson**, who managed the recent election, and to **Les** for stepping up to serve (again!)*

More SoCalMWA Accolades

AGATHA AWARDS

Winners will be announced at Malice Domestic in April.

Best Contemporary Mystery Novel

Wined and Died in New Orleans by **Ellen Byron**



What's inside



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PRESIDENT'S RAP SHEET



Taking up the Reins

BY LESLIE S. KLINGER



Déjà vu all over again! It was 2004, I think, when I was asked to take on the role of Chapter President to get us through a rough patch. That “patch” turned into a four-year term of office. At that time, the selection was mainly because I actually had an office staff, and we were still doing most things by mail! Now, in the electronic age, that support is less necessary, but I do have a Zoom account! I was blessed during those years by the incredible support of the Chapter Board, including especially **Patty Smiley**, Dianne Emley, and **Naomi Hirahara**, who served as Vice Presidents and did all the programming. **Gary Phillips** was also on the board then, and of course, Naomi and Gary went on to serve as chapter prezes.

I'm excited to take up the reins of the Chapter again. We have a large and powerful force here to be used to promote the genre of crime fiction and develop writers and readers. There's so much that the Chapter can and should do. Travis was a sterling leader, and he's a tough act to follow, but I'll do my best. I also expect to be an active voice on the National Board of Directors to make MWA more transparent and more member-friendly.

I will need your help. I will need your ideas, your support, and—if possible—your attendance at Chapter meetings and other events. If you'd like to be active in the Chapter, organizing activities, or just participating in programs, please let me know! I plan to be fully accessible via e-mail and telephone as needed. The best contacts are mail@lesliesklinger.com or my office phone at 310-475-1444.

Thanks for trusting me with the stewardship again. I'll work hard to repay that trust.

Best,

Les Klinger

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Leslie S. Klinger

VICE PRESIDENT
Jennifer Younger

TREASURER
Sarah M. Chen

SECRETARY
TBD

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Nancy Cole Silverman

PRESIDENT EMERITUS
Travis Richardson

Mystery Writers of America Southern California Chapter

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Too Much? Not Enough?

BY HOLLY WEST

This morning, I was on YouTube, looking for an ambiance video to play in the background while I drank my coffee and read the news. During my search, I happened upon an unrelated video about bullet journaling for writers.

I'm an absolute sucker for this sort of thing. I *love* planners and notebooks. Not only do they provide a creative outlet for me, they provide inspiration and help me define my goals. There's nothing like a beautifully designed planner layout to get me going.

I watched the video, and I ended up being both inspired and overwhelmed. Inspired because the idea of creating one of these for myself sounded fun. Overwhelmed because I realized the writer who'd designed it was working on three different projects at the same time—one in the editing phase, one in the writing phase, and one in the plotting stage.

I found myself thinking about whether adding more projects to my plate—all at different stages of development—might be helpful to my overall productivity and output.

The answer to that question is *yes*. If I'm working more, I'm producing more. But does that mean I'd *finish* more? Knowing myself as I do, I understand that adding more projects would probably mean I'd abandon the WIP I've been working on in favor of something shiny and new.

I dream of being a writer who is able to focus on multiple projects. For a long time, I beat myself up about it. Thankfully, I've moved past the negative self-talk, and it's helped me put things in perspective. I truly believe that knowing and trusting our own processes, plus working within the natural boundaries our minds create for us, is one of the keys to living a satisfying creative life.

All this to say, I won't be designing a writer's bullet journal or adding any more books to my plate any time soon.

Holly

The March of Crime

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
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FRESH BLOOD

Paul Ryan O'Connor

After a decades-long career in video games, Paul turned to a life of crime (writing). He made his mystery fiction debut with "Teddy's Favorite Thing" at *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* in 2023, a story about mass layoffs at a game studio, told through the eyes of a child on bring-your-kid-to-work day. He has a second story pending at *EQMM* and recently made sales to *Mystery Magazine* and *Shotgun Honey*. Paul lives in Encinitas, California, five blocks from the beach he never visits, where he alternates between plotting his full escape from the video game business and re-writing his first novel. More at paulryanoconnor.com.



Pitch-O-Rama 2024

SPONSORED BY THE WNBA-SF

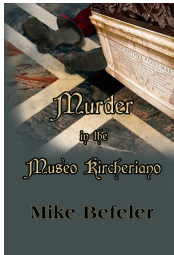
The Women's National Book Association—San Francisco Chapter (WNBA-SF) invites MWA members to participate in their Pitch-O-Rama event on Saturday, April 20, from 8 a.m.–1 p.m. PT virtually on Zoom.

Following last year's 20th anniversary of Pitch-O-Rama, they are bringing this highly anticipated event back in 2024 for fiction and nonfiction writers to pitch their works to agents and editors for publication. All writers are welcome to attend both the pre-pitch coaching event and the Pitch-O-Rama event.

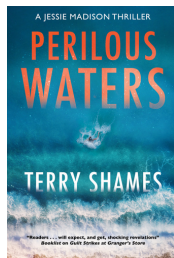
- To register for Pitch-O-Rama and for more information, please [visit this link](#).
- To register for pre-pitch coaching on March 28 and for more information, please [visit this link](#).

A detailed list of agents and publishers who will be attending and taking pitches will be posted soon.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the [WNBA-SF](#).



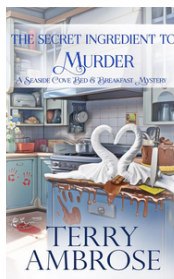
Mike Befeler's historical mystery, *Murder in the Museo Kircheriano*, will be published in this month (Mystic Publishers). 17th century Jesuit priest Athanasius Kircher created the world's most amazing museum. When Queen Christina abdicates the Swedish throne, converts to Catholicism, and visits the museum, they discover a dead body and team up to solve the mystery.



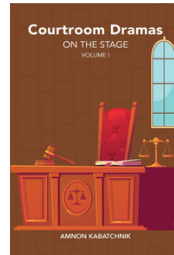
Terry Shames' Perilous Waters, first in the Jessie Madison thriller series, launches April 2 from Severn House Publishing. *BookList* says, "Sun, sand, sex, and murder make Shames' series starter the perfect escapist caper." Shames' *Guilt Strikes at Granger's Store* (October 2023, Severn House) was named one of the year's top mysteries by *Library Journal*.



Andrew Kaplan's new book, *Once Upon a Villa: Adventures on the French Riviera*, is a fun memoir of the time Andrew and his young family decided to chuck it all and live in a villa on the French Riviera while he wrote the *NY Times* bestseller, *Dragonfire*. Out March 6.



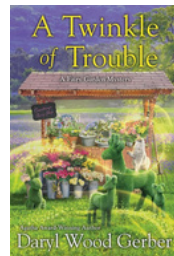
In Seaside Cove, every truffle has a dark side. On March 28, **Terry Ambrose's** eighth Seaside Cove Bed & Breakfast Mystery, *The Secret Ingredient to Murder*, will be released. Once again, it's time to visit the little town where murder meets the sea.



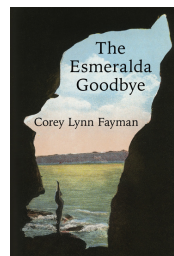
Amnon Kabatchnik's *Courtroom Dramas on the Stage* won a 2024 Independent Press Award Distinguished Favorite in the category of Reference. Kabatchnik's *Horror on the Stage* won a 2024 Independent Press Award Distinguished Favorite in the category of Performing Arts.



In Cold Hard Cash by **Gary Phillips**, ex-showgirl turned outlaw courier Martha Chainey is asked by her old friend Rena to find ten million in grant monies stolen from the community organization Rena heads. The trail leads Martha from the Salton Sea's Slab City to a tony Silicon Beach campus, where the antifa oriented B-Commoners and the alt-right Reclaimers are also hunting for the swag. A Comixology Original for the Kindle.

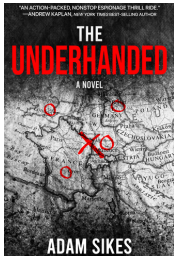


The fifth book in **Daryl Wood Gerber's** Fairy Garden Mysteries, *A Twinkle of Trouble*, comes out in April (Kensington Books). The murder of Courtney's friend, Genevieve, casts a pall over the Summer Blooms festival. Working with only a germ of a clue, Courtney will have to overturn every rock to get the dirt on the real killer ...



Corey Lynn Fayman's new historical crime novel, *The Esmeralda Goodbye*, received an Editor's Pick review from *Booklife*, calling it a "superior 1950s California noir." Murders, mobsters, intelligence agency intrigue, and a touch of old-Hollywood glamor power this story of a rookie police officer who uncovers murder and mayhem when he tangles with the rich and famous guests of a 1950s seaside resort.

OVER THE TRANSOM



Adam Sikes' second novel, *The Underhanded*, comes out April 2. Neo-fascism and extreme nationalism are rising across Europe, but Professor William Dresden has his own problems and would rather ignore the headlines. When an adrift MI6 officer tells him his family is connected to the forces behind it all, however, he's thrust into a shadowy war that is tearing apart the West.



Black Cat Weekly, Issue #126 (Wildside Press) published the locked-room mystery "Behind a Locked Door" by **Peter DiChellis**.



APPEARANCES & EVENTS



Laurie Stevens will be the keynote speaker at the Brandeis National Committee's Palm Desert chapter's annual Book and Author Event on March 19. She'll discuss her research into AI and her new book, *The Return*. Email Carol for more information and to register.

Adam Sikes' book launch event for *The Underhanded* will occur on Wednesday, April 10, at 6:30 p.m. at Arvida Book Co. in Old Town Tustin. **Travis Richardson** will interview Adam, and there will be light hor d'oeuvres as well as wine showcased from Sutro Wine and the Warnecke Ranch & Vineyards.

Jennifer J. Chow will be appearing with Gigi Pandian at Book Carnival in Orange on Saturday, March 2, at 2 p.m. She'll also be in conversation with **Iris Yamashita** at Octavia's Bookshelf in Pasadena on Saturday, March 16, at 6 p.m.

Donis Casey's "Tell Me Your Story" guest author for March is **Jeffrey Siger**, an American living on the Aegean Greek island of Mykonos. His Andreas Kaldis novels explore serious societal issues confronting modern day Greece while touching upon the country's ancient roots. Jeff's story will appear March 20–31 on Donis' [website](#).



CRIME CALENDER



April 11–14: Left Coast Crime 2024, Bellevue, WA
April 26–28: Malice Domestic, Bethesda, MD
August 22–25: Killer Nashville, Franklin, TN
August 28–September 1: Bouchercon, Nashville, TN

If you know of an event that belongs on the Crime Calendar, email themarchofcrime@gmail.com with the info.

THE LAST WORD



"Henry eyed the Russian, listening to his guttural tone, listening to the pot on the stove simmer, and listening to the wind howl. Something wasn't right."

Landslide
A Mason Hackett Espionage Thriller
by **Adam Sikes**