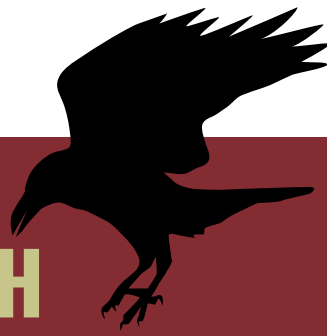


FEBRUARY 2025

THE MARCH OF CRIME

SoCalMWA's monthly newsletter.



Edgar® Award Finalists

Presentation on May 1 in New York City

Congratulations to SoCalMWA members **Isabella Maldonado**, nominated in the Best Paperback Original category for *A Forgotten Kill* (Amazon Publishing—Thomas & Mercer), and **Alexa Donne**, nominated in the Young Adult category for *The Bitter End* (Random House Books for Young Readers).

BEST NOVEL

The Tainted Cup by **Robert Jackson Bennett**
(Penguin Random House—Random House Worlds/Del Rey)

Rough Trade by **Katrina Carrasco**
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux—MCD)

Things Don't Break on Their Own by **Sarah Easter Collins**
(Penguin Random House—Crown)

My Favorite Scar by **Nicolás Ferraro**
(Soho Press—Soho Crime)

The God of the Woods by **Liz Moore**
(Penguin Random House—Riverhead Books)

Listen for the Lie by **Amy Tintera**
(Macmillan Publishers—Celadon Books)

The In Crowd by **Charlotte Vassell**
(Penguin Random House—Doubleday)

BEST FIRST NOVEL BY AN AMERICAN AUTHOR

Twice the Trouble by **Ash Clifton**
(Crooked Lane Books)

Cold to the Touch by **Kerri Hakoda**
(Crooked Lane Books)

continued on pg. 7

What's inside

.....
[Edgar® Award Finalists p. 1](#)

[President's Rap Sheet p. 2](#)

[Editor's Corner p. 3](#)

[News & Announcements p. 4](#)

[Over the Transom p. 5](#)

[Appearances & Events p. 6](#)

[L.A. Fire Resources p. 10](#)

[Crime Calendar p. 11](#)

[The Last Word p. 11](#)



PRESIDENT'S RAP SHEET



L.A. Strong

BY LESLIE S. KLINGER



I've read many books about the Blitz and seen pictures of what London looked like during the horror of WWII. I never imagined that I would see the same scenes in Los Angeles. In some ways, the damage wrought by the L.A. fires is what I dreamed might be the result of the Big One, but unlike an earthquake, this disaster seemed to go on and on. Having warnings certainly saved many lives and valuables, but it also increased the fear. I live in Malibu, and some might say that we volunteered for this kind of terror, but this was so much more.

As writers, I think we have special responsibilities at times like this. I truly feel that books have an important place in a shattered world. First, we can help our readers find solace in the order we bring to the universes that we create or explain. Second, we can help our readers understand their lives. Bad things happen, many of them to people who don't seem to deserve them. Still, I firmly believe that the moral arc of the universe tends toward justice and mercy and goodness, and when those bad things happen, we can bend that arc in that direction. Our books—believe this!—can teach our readers how.

My heart goes out to so many friends who lost their homes. This includes several of our Chapter members. I'm proud that the immediate impulse of our Board and members was to say, "How can we help?" The National Board expressed much the same.

You'll see some of the results of those impulses in this newsletter. We've compiled a list of resources and posted them on our website. We have (modest) hardship grants to aid members in need. We're also here to provide hugs and encouragement as needed!

Please don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it!

L.A. strong!

Les

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Twitter: [@socalmwa](https://twitter.com/socalmwa)
Facebook: [Like us](#)



Finding Comfort in Words

BY HOLLY WEST

Les's President's Rap really resonated with me this month. Between the L.A. fires and other world events, January was not the fresh start many of us were looking for. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Many of you know I live in Northern California now, just east of Sacramento. While I'm fortunate not to have been directly affected by the fires in Southern California this time around, I am no stranger to the oppressive layers of smoke, evacuation warnings and orders, flames visible in the distance, and dangerous air quality measurements. My heart is broken for my beloved Los Angeles, the place I called home for most of my adult life.

But as Les points out in his Rap, there is solace and comfort in books, both in the reading and writing of them. Lately, I've been doing more reading than writing, and in January, I attended two book club meetings at my local independent bookstore. I was reminded once again that the writing and reading community are undoubtedly my people. A safe space to land, so to speak.

In this month's newsletter, I've compiled a News & Announcements page to accommodate the events and opportunities coming up in the next couple of months. Please check it out to see some of the things our chapter has planned for you (as well as other announcements that might be of interest).

Wishing you all a peaceful February.

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.

Contact us at:
themarchofcrime@gmail.com

Join the SoCalMWA
Discussion Group

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

NATIONAL OFFICE
Mystery Writers of America
1140 Broadway #1507
New York, NY 10001
t. 212.888.8171
mwa@mysterywriters.org
<http://mysterywriters.org>



MWA HARDSHIP GRANTS

MWA offers hardship grants to members who have been greatly impacted by national disasters. The grant is no more than \$1,000 and does not need to be returned. For more information, please [email Margery Flax](mailto:Margery_Flax@MWA.org) at the national office.

SEMWA Presents:
Organizational Tips for Writers
FEBRUARY 10, 7:30 P.M. ET
On Zoom

The Southeast chapter of MWA will host author Traci Hunter Abramson in a discussing about organization strategies for writers. [Check out Traci's bio here.](#)

[Register for this event here.](#)

MWA-U 2025 with AuthorBytes
FEBRUARY 5, 8 P.M. ET
On Zoom

In this presentation, [AuthorBytes](#) will share key insights it has gleaned from 25 years of creating websites for bestselling, mid-list, and debut authors.

Register here: ⇒ [MWA Members](#) (free)
⇒ [Non-members](#) \$20

2025 ANTHOLOGY WRITERS CONFERENCE REQUEST FOR PANEL/WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

The 2025 Anthology Writers Conference is scheduled for May 10, 2025, at Benedictine University in Mesa, and they're now accepting panel and workshop proposals.

Sisters in Crime Desert Sleuths Chapter and Arizonan members of Mystery Writers of America are collaborating to provide two full-day tracks of 50-minute panels and presentations, with perhaps a workshop or two for this event.

Contact Fred Andersen at fxandersen@msn.com for details. Deadline for proposals **February 28**.

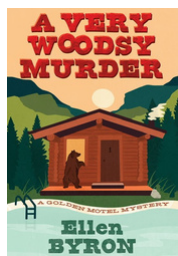
SAVE THE DATE

February 16, 11 a.m: SoCalMWA will host a virtual podcast with PR pros Megan Beatie and Erin Mitchell, plus website designer Maddie James. [Register here to attend.](#)

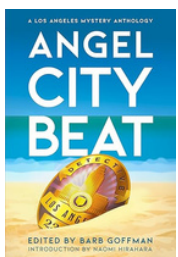
SoCalMWA is starting our virtual author reading series beginning **March 28**. Keep your eyes open for more information and our sign up email in a few weeks!



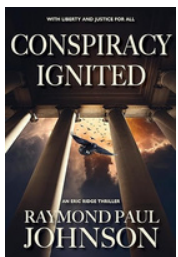
Gary Phillips's short story, "Surreptitious," appears in the prose anthology *Captain America: The Shield of Sam Wilson*. In it, Wilson is tasked by the spy agency SHIELD to retrieve a cache of alien Skrull super-weapons on a Caribbean atoll. The collection is a tie-in of sorts to the upcoming Marvel film, *Captain America: Brave New World*.



A Very Woodsy Murder by Ellen Byron is nominated for the Best Humorous Mystery Lefty Award.



Aimee Kluck's short story, "The Missing Mariachi," is published in the Sisters in Crime Los Angeles anthology *Angel City Beat*. Also, Kluck's story "Lana Rose" is published in the *Big Smoke Pulp, Vol. 1*. Launch date coming soon.



The new audiobook for Raymond Paul Johnson's debut novel *Conspiracy Ignited* has received an All-Five-Stars Review by K.C. Finn of Readers' Favorite Reviews: "An expertly produced audiobook that enhances...this gripping legal thriller through masterful narration." [More info.](#)



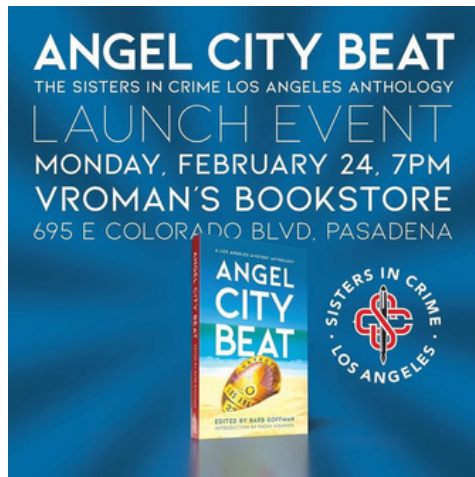
Ken Funsten, CFA's first two short stories ever appear in the 2024 Sisters in Crime Los Angeles anthology, *Angel City Beat*, edited by Barb Goffman, with introduction by Naomi Hirahara, and published by Level Best Books. "A Deadline" is about a teen with a summer job giving away free lunches who overhears life and death, while "What's Really Unforgettable" is about an immigrant entrepreneur who loses his memory just before he is about to cash in and take his company public.



Susan Cummins Miller's latest novel, *My Bonney Lies Under*, a Keridec Rees historical mystery set in the summer of 1885, was released in January by Artemesia Publishing. Also, Miller's latest poetry collection, *Deciphering the Desert*, received the 2024 Will Rogers Silver Medallion Award in Western Written Poetry.

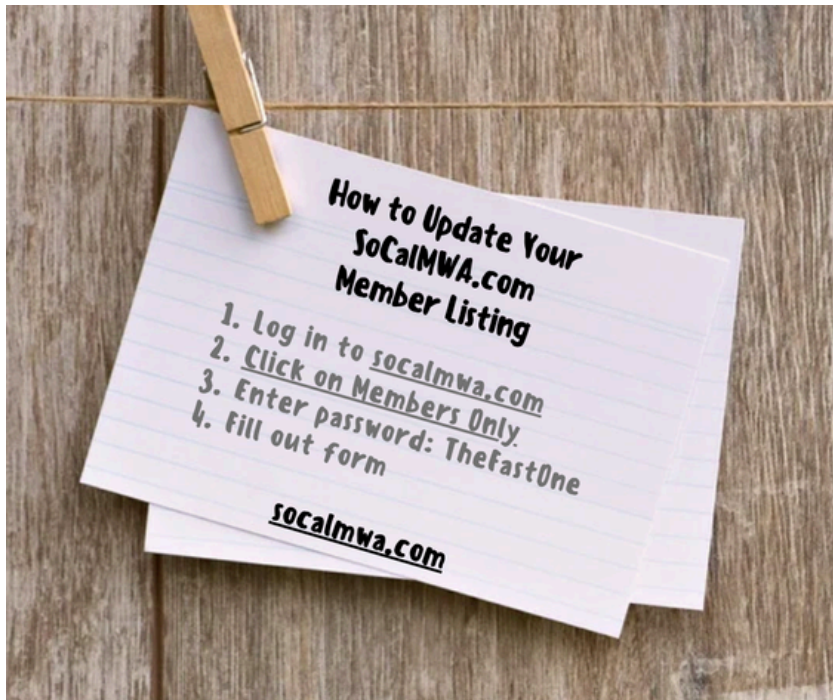
Rosemary Lord is the author of non-fiction history books *Los Angeles Then and Now* and *Hollywood Then and Now*, which have been bought by Harper Collins Publishers. Lord will create and write a new version of *Los Angeles Then and Now* to be released prior to the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. The new history will include coverage of the tragic January 2025 fires and lost and destroyed historic landmarks.

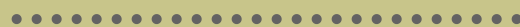
APPEARANCES & EVENTS



Donis Casey's "Tell Me Your Story" blog is thrilled to welcome Penny Orloff, a former actor/dancer whose first solo show, "Jewish Thighs on Broadway," was based on her best-selling novel of the same name. Also a professional Life Coach and Tarot reader, Orloff is the author of *Art as Lifework*, *Life as Artwork*, and is at work on her new book, *Who Would You Be If You Had Nothing to Bitch About?* Don't miss her story beginning February 20.

Georgia Jeffries will be reading from her novel, *The Younger Girl*, on February 23 at 2 p.m. at Book Carnival, 348 S. Tustin Ave, Orange, in conversation with **Marjorie McCown**, author of *Final Cut* and *Starstruck*.





continued from pg. 1

BEST FIRST NOVEL BY AN AMERICAN AUTHOR (continued)

The Mechanics of Memory by Audrey Lee
(CamCat Books)

A Jewel in the Crown by David Lewis
(Kensington Books—A John Scognamiglio Book)

The President's Lawyer by Lawrence Robbins
(Simon & Schuster—Atria Books)

Holy City by Henry Wise
(Grove Atlantic—Atlantic Monthly Press)

BEST PAPERBACK ORIGINAL

The Paris Widow by Kimberly Belle
(Harlequin Trade Publishing—Park Row Books)

The Vacancy in Room 10 by Seraphina Nova Glass
(Harlequin Trade Publishing—Graydon House)

Shell Games by Bonnie Kistler
(HarperCollins—Harper Paperbacks)

A Forgotten Kill by Isabella Maldonado
(Amazon Publishing—Thomas & Mercer)

The Road to Heaven by Alexis Stefanovich-Thomson
(Dundurn Press Ltd.)

BEST FACT CRIME

Long Haul: Hunting the Highway Serial Killers by Frank Figliuzzi
(HarperCollins—Mariner Books)

The Infernal Machine: A True Story of Dynamite, Terror, and the Rise of the Modern Detective by Steven Johnson
(Penguin Random House—Crown)

A Devil Went Down to Georgia: Race, Power, Privilege, and the Murder of Lita McClinton by Deb Miller Landau
(Pegasus Books—Pegasus Crime)

BEST FACT CRIME (continued)

The Amish Wife: Unraveling the Lies, Secrets, and Conspiracy that Let a Killer Go Free by Gregg Olsen
(Amazon Publishing—Thomas & Mercer)

Hell Put to Shame: The 1921 Murder Farm Massacre and the Horror of America's Second Slavery by Earl Swift
(HarperCollins—Mariner Books)

The Bishop and the Butterfly: Murder, Politics, and the End of the Jazz Age by Michael Wolraich
(Union Square & Co.)

BEST CRITICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL

James Sallis: A Companion to the Mystery Fiction by Nathan Ashman
(McFarland Publishing)

American Noir Film: From The Maltese Falcon to Gone Girl by M. Keith Booker
(Rowman & Littlefield Publishers)

Organized Crime on Page and Screen: Portrayals in Hit Novels, Films, and Television Shows by David Geherin
(McFarland Publishing)

On Edge: Gender and Genre in the Work of Shirley Jackson, Patricia Highsmith, and Leigh Brackett by Ashley Lawson
(The Ohio State University Press)

Ian Fleming: The Complete Man by Nicholas Shakespeare
(HarperCollins—Harper)

continued on pg. 8



continued from pg. 7

BEST SHORT STORY

“Cut and Thirst,” Amazon Original Stories by Margaret Atwood
(Amazon Publishing)

“Everywhere You Look,” Amazon Original Stories by Liv Constantine
(Amazon Publishing)

“Eat My Moose,” *Conjunctions: 82, Works & Days* by Erika Krouse
(Bard College)

“Barriers to Entry,” Amazon Original Stories by Ariel Lawhon
(Amazon Publishing)

“The Art of Cruel Embroidery,” *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine* – July-August 2024 by Steven Sheil
(Dell Magazine)

BEST JUVENILE

The Beanstalk Murder by P.G. Bell
(MacMillan Publishers—Feiwel & Friends)

Mystery of Mystic Mountain by Janet Fox
(Simon & Schuster BFYR)

Mysteries of Trash and Treasure: The Stolen Key by Margaret Peterson Haddix
(HarperCollins—Quill Tree Books)

The Spindle of Fate by Aimee Lim
(MacMillan Publishers—Feiwel & Friends)

Find Her by Ginger Reno
(Holiday House)

BEST YOUNG ADULT

Looking for Smoke by K.A. Cobell
(Harper Collins—Heartdrum)

The Bitter End by Alexa Donne
(Random House Books for Young Readers)

BEST YOUNG ADULT (continued)

A Crane Among Wolves by June Hur
(MacMillan Publishers—Feiwel & Friends)

Death at Morning House by Maureen Johnson
(HarperCollins Publishers—Harper Teen)

49 Miles Alone by Natalie D. Richards
(Sourcebooks—Fire)

BEST TV EPISODE TELEPLAY

“Episode Five”—*Rebus*, Written by Gregory Burke
(Viaplay)

“Episode One”—*Monsieur Spade*, Written by Tom Fontana & Scott Frank
(AMC)

“Episode One”—*Moonflower Murders*, Written by Anthony Horowitz
(Masterpiece PBS)

“Mirror”—*Murderesses*, Written by Wiktor Piatkowski, Joanna Kozłowska, Katarzyna Kaczmarek
(Viaplay)

“Episode Two”—*The Marlow Murder Club*, Written by Robert Thorogood
(Masterpiece PBS)

OTHER AWARDS

ROBERT L. FISH MEMORIAL AWARD

“The Legend of Penny and the Luck of the Draw Casino,” *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, May-June 2024 by Pat Gaudet
(Dell Magazines)

“Head Start,” *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, September-October 2024 by Kai Lovelace
(Dell Magazines)

continued on pg. 9



continued from pg. 8

ROBERT L. FISH MEMORIAL AWARD

(continued)

“Murder Under Sedation,” *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, March-April 2024 by Lawrence Ong
(Dell Magazines)

“The Jews on Elm Street,” *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, September-October 2024 by Anna Stolley Persky
(Dell Magazines)

“Sparrow Maker,” *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, November-December 2024 by Jake Stein
(Dell Magazines)

SIMON & SCHUSTER MARY HIGGINS CLARK AWARD

The Rose Arbor by Rhys Bowen
(Amazon Publishing—Lake Union)

The Serial Killer Guide to San Francisco by Michelle Chouinard
(Macmillan Publishers—Minotaur Books)

The Mystery Writer by Sulari Gentill
(Sourcebooks—Poisoned Pen Press)

Return to Wyldcliffe Heights by Carol Goodman
(HarperCollins—William Morrow Paperbacks)

Death in the Details by Katie Tietjen
(Crooked Lane Books)

G.P. PUTNAM’S SONS SUE GRAFTON MEMORIAL AWARD

Disturbing the Dead by Kelley Armstrong
(MacMillan Publishers—Minotaur Books)

A Game of Lies by Clare Mackintosh
(Sourcebooks—Sourcebooks Landmark)

Proof by Beverly McLachlin
(Simon & Schuster Canada—Simon & Schuster)

G.P. PUTNAM’S SONS SUE GRAFTON MEMORIAL AWARD (continued)

A World of Hurt by Mindy Mejia
(Grove Atlantic—Atlantic Monthly Press)

All the Way Gone by Joanna Schaffhausen
(MacMillan Publishers—Minotaur Books)

The Comfort of Ghosts by Jacqueline Winspear
(Soho Press—Soho Crime)

LILIAN JACKSON BRAUN MEMORIAL AWARD

The Murders in Great Diddling by Katarina Bivald
(Sourcebooks—Poisoned Press)

Death and Fromage by Ian Moore
(Sourcebooks—Poisoned Press)

Booked for Murder by P.J. Nelson
(MacMillan Publishers—Minotaur Books)

Murder on Devil’s Pond by Ayla Rose
(Crooked Lane Books)

The Treasure Hunters Club by Tom Ryan
(Grove Atlantic—Atlantic Press)

SPECIAL AWARDS

GRANDMASTER

Laura Lippman
John Sandford

RAVEN AWARD

Face in a Book Bookstore & Gifts, El Dorado Hills, CA

ELLERY QUEEN AWARD

Peter Wolverton, Vice President, Executive Editor, St. Martin’s Press





RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS

[CCF Wildfire Recovery Fund](#)

[DirectRelief California Fire Relief](#)

[California Fire Foundation Wildfire & Disaster Relief](#)

[LAFD Foundation](#)

[FEMA library meetings](#)

ANIMAL RESCUE

[ASPCA](#)

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES

Report illegally hiked rents or prices: call @MyLA311

[Information on Fires](#)

OTHER DONATION LOCATIONS

L.A. Council members [Traci Park](#), [Monica Rodriguez](#), and [Marqueece Harris-Dawson](#) are accepting donations at their offices of baby food, dog food, non-perishable food, bottled water, and clothing. Check your local area for others.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

[FEMA \(Federal Emergency Management Agency\)](#): Offers disaster assistance for temporary housing, home repairs, and other needs. Hotline 800.652.3362.

[California Governor's Office of Emergency Services \(Cal OES\)](#): Provides state-specific disaster relief programs and resources.

[California Governor's Office](#): How to apply for Federal aid

[Property Tax Relief](#)

HOUSING & REBUILDING

[Disaster Housing Assistance Program \(HUD\)](#):

Temporary housing solutions and financial assistance

[Rebuild Your Home \(HUD\)](#)

INSURANCE & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

[California Department of Insurance](#): Guidance on filing insurance claims and accessing state insurance resources.

[Small Business Administration \(SBA\) Disaster Assistance](#): Low-interest loans for homeowners, renters, and businesses.

MENTAL HEALTH & COUNSELING

[SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline](#): 24/7 emotional support and crisis counseling. (800.662.4357)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#).

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

[American Red Cross](#)

[Salvation Army](#)

[SAG/AFTRA](#)

[World Central Kitchen](#)

[United Way—2-1-1](#): Connects individuals with local resources and support services.

[Postponement of Tax Filings & Payments](#)

Tax Casualty Losses: Taxpayers who have suffered losses due to the fires may be eligible to take tax casualty losses on their returns in the year of loss or prior year (so may apply to returns filed this year).

CRIME CALENDAR



2025

February 16: SoCalMWA Presents: PR Pros Virtual Panel, Crowdcast

March 13–16: Left Coast Crime, Denver, CO

March 15–16: Tucson Festival of Books, Tucson, AZ

March 28: SoCalMWA Virtual Readers Series, Crowdcast (Details soon)

April 25–27: Malice Domestic, Bethesda, MD

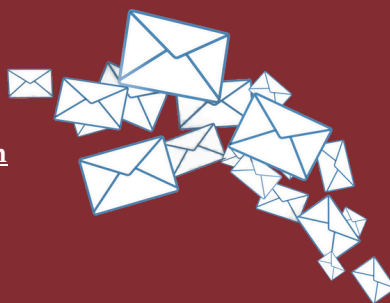
April 26–27: LA Times Festival of Books, Los Angeles

May 14–18: Sleuthfest, St. Petersburg, FL

June 17–21: Thriller Fest XX, New York, NY

September 3–7: Bouchercon, New Orleans, LA

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



THE LAST WORD



“The air smells like possibilities, or maybe it’s just cheap booze and Axe body spray.”

The Bitter End
by Alexa Donne