

THE MARCH OF CRIME

MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA — SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The Four Cent War :

Why You Should Give a Damn About the WGA Strike

Why should you care if some rich Hollywood screenwriter makes four cents more every time someone buys a DVD of the latest brain-dead blockbuster?

Well imagine, for example, that Amazon came to us fiction writers and said, "Look we have this new Kindle thing, and we aren't sure if it's gonna fly. So do us a favor and take an eighty percent cut in your royalties on Kindle downloads, just until the market for this exciting new technology can gain strength and get more solid." Then imagine that, twenty years later, Amazon was making money hand-over-fist on a newer, better version of the Kindle, but we writers were still only making the same measly sliver we had agreed to when the technology was first created.

That's exactly what happened to screen and teleplay writers when the home VCR was introduced. Twenty years after the birth of home video, writers are still only getting four cents on every twenty dollar DVD.

DVD sales are now a hugely profitable market, so the writers want their fair share. They're asking for eight cents. That's right, just eight cents out of twenty dollars on a DVD that would not exist without the person who wrote the film or television show that DVD contains.

In addition to the long-promised DVD raise, the Writers Guild is

also asking that internet downloads and "streaming" content be treated like television reruns and that the writers be paid accordingly.

Although streaming content is technically "free," profit from sales of ad space and "metadata" is proving to be extremely lucrative. Once again the writers are simply asking for a fair share of the profit being made on a product that would not exist without their creative effort.

Not only that, but it's starting to look as if television and the internet may soon merge into a unified method of content delivery. If that happens and writers have not secured any kind of payment for internet usage, you can bet the networks will happily ditch the old television rate and use only the internet pay rate. That currently stands at exactly zero percent.

And as for the argument that screenwriters are a bunch of spoiled rich guys who don't need any more money, that's no argument. Putting aside the fact that in reality, the majority of screenwriters are far from

rich and often go a year or more between gigs, it ought to be obvious that even the bestselling authors like Stephen King or JK Rowling deserve to be equally and fairly paid for the use of their work, no more or less than any of the rest of us.

This strike is about the rights of all writers, whether famous or unknown, rich or poor and everywhere in between.

"We are a community of writers," says Lee Goldberg, author of *My Gun Has Bullets* and script writer for television shows such as *Monk* and *Diagnosis Murder*, "...not just book writers or screen writers. Plus there are many writers who straddle both worlds...or, if they don't now, may someday in the future.

"But in a more general sense, we should be concerned as writers about any efforts to limit the royalties we receive from the commercial exploitation of our creative work. Many of the corporations that own the studios and networks also own major publishing compa-



(The Four Cent War, Continued from page 1)

nies...if they succeed in limiting what screenwriters get from new media, they will only be encouraged to seek similar 'rollbacks' from authors and other artists who, incidentally, don't have the benefit of being represented by a powerful union. The final deal struck between the corporations and the WGA in those emerging markets could create a template for how writers of books, computer games, and other media are treated."

Bill Bryan, author of *Keep It Real* and writer for shows like *Coach* and *Night Court*, is a kind of internet pioneer in the brave new world of downloadable content that cuts the network middlemen completely out of the picture.

"In the new media landscape," Bryan says, "unlimited distribution channels around the media conglomerates

will mean a much more fragmented audience, with tons of opportunities for writers to work, albeit for less upfront pay. That means that profit participation – which is what residuals really are - will be a key to survival. There are other ways that writers and other creative people can protect themselves – for instance, by using the internet to go

and take their content directly to the audience. But for anyone who doesn't have the time, money, and balls to be a trailblazer, it is absolutely critical that the WGA prevails.

"Or, if that's too long-winded for you, how about this: Who the fuck ever roots for the suits?" Not me, that's for sure. But, hey, don't take my word for it, or Goldberg's or Bryan's. Go scope out the skinny for yourself.

The Writer's Guild of America website: <http://www.wga.org/>

A short film explaining the basics of the WGA strike: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJ55Ir2jCzk>

Nikki Finke's Deadline Hollywood Daily, providing comprehensive insider coverage of the day to day details: <http://www.deadlinehollywooddaily.com/>

United Hollywood, a strike blog with an excellent FAQ <http://www.unitedhollywood.com/>

-Christa Faust

Author of *Money Shot*
<http://christafaust.com>

"This fight is for the rights of all creative artists, and our collective future is at stake."

-Alan Rosenberg, President of the Screen Actors Guild



MWASoCal members Christa Faust and Lee Goldberg on the picket line

What is the aim of the So Cal Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America? According to the organizational documents of MWA, the purpose of MWA as a whole is to foster and promote the mystery genre, and to educate the public, writers, and aspiring mystery writers about the genre. Although the National organization gets all the glory—arising principally from the annual awarding of the Edgars® and its fine newsletter "The Third Degree"—in fact, the real work of the organization is carried out by the Chapters, of which there are 11. The So Cal Chapter is not the largest geographically (although we cover parts of

California, Arizona, Nevada and Hawaii) nor numerically (although we include about 10% of the National membership). However, our Chapter does have the highest percentage of "Active" members—that is, professional writers—of any Chapter, with almost 70% Active membership.

Our education of the public and writers takes the principal form of programs. In the past few years, for example, we've presented conversations or interviews

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The President's Rap Sheet

(President's Rap Continued from page 2)

between successful writers in a variety of subgenres, including biography, cozies, hard-boiled, television, and thrillers. We conducted a workshop on presentation skills. We had a class on the business of writing, covering contracts and taxes. We've hosted panels on finding an agent, publicizing your book, and understanding the small press. These programs have been open to our entire membership, including professional writers, unpublished writers, and aficionados of the genre.

In addition, we try to connect writers with each other. Although proverbially writing is a solitary profession, we've been very successful in sponsoring events that I jokingly refer to as "MWA: Drinks." These are no-host gatherings at a watering spot held on the last Wednesday of every month, designed simply to give our members a place to meet and interact, with *no* agenda. In addition, we co-hosted a cocktail party at the Mystery Bookstore on the eve of the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books (and will do so again this year), and we plan to co-host a party with the National Office of MWA during Book Expo in June of this year. In addition, there's our annual holiday party, and last year we had a successful summer outing.

We also reach out to the public by sponsoring events (or at least having a presence at public events) and through our Speakers Bureau. We co-hosted an "in conversation with..." presentation last year with

the Foundation of the Los Angeles Public Library and look forward to extending this partnership. We've annually hosted a booth at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books in May and the West Hollywood Book Fair in September. Last year, we co-hosted with Sisters in Crime/Los Angeles a large party honoring writers from Northern California, and we look forward to another shared event this year. We've also committed to co-sponsoring the "No Crimes Unpublished" conference historically presented by Sisters in Crime/Los Angeles, to be next held in 2009.

The final vital components of our outreach are this newsletter, designed to bring our members news of past events as well as upcoming events, and our website, www.socalmwa.com. The newsletter includes educational material as well, such as our regular feature on computers and technology, and our website includes photos and audio recordings of our past programs, designed to permit members who can't attend our programs to benefit from them.

We're still learning how best to fulfill our mission. Our Chapter is strong and vital, and I'm proud to be at its helm for another year. We need the help of all of our members to succeed in our goals, and your ideas for future programs, events, and outreach are most welcome. I've included my e-mail here, and I'd love to hear from you about what we're doing right and wrong and what we should be doing. I hope to see all of you at our events during the year!

Les Klinger, Chapter President
mail@lesliesklinger.com

MWA SoCal Holiday Party 2007

It was a cold, rainy, windy night, but a number of our intrepid members made it to the Johnathan Beach Club in Santa Monica to hoist a few, to nosh and to enjoy the camaraderie.



Les Klinger & Dianne Emley jumping in the air. (above)

Jim Warren & Ingrid Willis (right)



Christa Faust & Patty Smiley (left)

Dianne Emley & Bill Bryan (above)

OPINION: MURDEROUS SALES ONLINE

Massive Internet used book sales are literally killing the careers of countless writers.

We get no royalties or credit for these used books sales, and our publishers make no money from them. As soon as our hardcovers or paperbacks hit the market, the Internet booksellers start buying them up used and selling them very cheaply, and resell them over and over. Why should someone buy a new book when they can purchase a used hardcover for a fraction of the price?

Used book sales, which reportedly now account for about 12 percent of the entire market, have eaten so deeply into our paperback sales that many of us no longer have our books published in paperback, myself included.

Consider this: Recently, my first mystery, *Simple Justice*, turned up at Number 51 on the Amazon.com bestseller list for *current* gay men's mysteries. That's great, except that *Simple Justice* has been out of print

for more than seven years, meaning these are all used book sales.

After writing ten mysteries, I have more readers than ever but am only credited with my initial hardcover sales. Over ten years, as my readership has grown, my income from my books has declined by half, and my publishing contract is in jeopardy. And now these Internet used book sales are starting to eat into my hardcover sales, further threatening my ability to make a living as a writer.

The Internet booksellers like to say that used books are a good way for readers to discover new authors. But most of those readers will simply continue to buy used books, so the offset is negligible. The Internet booksellers are killing the golden goose but don't care. Immediate profit is all that matters to them.

John Morgan Wilson

www.johnmorganwilson.com

Sleuthiness: Getting the Lowdown on the Slammer

Your protagonist is an ex-con gone straight. Better yet, he has a client in prison. Perhaps he's in prison for a crime he didn't commit. How do you find out what he's dealing with in there?

For information about California prisons in general, there's the CDCR (California Department of Corrections) <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/>. Other states have similar websites, such as Arizona <http://www.azcorrections.gov/> and New York <http://www.docs.state.ny.us/>. If you have a specific prison in mind, most state prison information can be accessed by Googling: "name of state" + prisons. You can find everything from statistics to educational and vocational opportunities for inmates, medical and psychological

services and even how they get their dinners.

Then, of course, there are federal prisons. This website, <http://www.bop.gov/locations/index.jsp>, gives a general overview of the federal prison system. Here you can learn the definitions of minimum, low, medium and high security facilities, find federal facilities across the nation, discover which are correctional facilities, correctional complexes, detention facilities, medical facilities, or prison camps. For statistical information on federal prison populations click on http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin/Documents/publications/inc_federalprisonpop.pdf.

However, what's life really like behind bars? Who knows better

than former inmates? To get a much more accurate picture of how it works for those who are in it, go to <http://www.prisontalk.com/>.

This is an online community in which former inmates answer questions about life on the inside. Registration is free. According to their home page, this site was conceived in a prison cell, and designed in a halfway house, and is intended for families and friends of inmates trying to navigate the system. Here you will find Live Chat, a list of resources, photo galleries and discussion forums – a veritable cornucopia of ideas and information.

Add that verisimilitude to your heroes or anti-heroes – or even your antagonists. Ask a prisoner.

—Patti Shinnors

Mystery-Sisters “Party of the Year” at UCLA

There were 81 writers, readers and guests at the combined SoCal-MWA/SinC-LA “Wine and Hors d’oeuvres Reception” at U.C.L.A. in December. They were “dressed to kill” and totally into signing, bragging, accepting accolades, and networking. Oh, and don’t forget the munching and slurping of yummy snacks and bubbly beverages. (Say THAT three times fast after a glass or two!)



Dianne Emley of MWA was responsible for a lot of the work behind putting the event together, which was originally meant to be the MWA Awards Banquet. When that didn’t come about, the decision was made to have a party! Diana James and Lori Wolf from Sisters in Crime pitched in to organize the bash. It also seemed like a good idea to invite some writers from Northern California.

Cara Black, Laurie King, Steve Brewer and Tim Maleeny came on down and mingled with us Southerners quite affably. They briefly shared a few humor-

ous words.

Steve said he was the most prolific “unknown author” present, with 16 books published. *Cutthroat* is his newest offering. He also promised to shake hands with everyone in attendance.

Laurie commented wryly on being introduced as “lovely” and later said she probably enjoyed her Mary Russell series the most, but did more research on her Kate Martinelli books. (Ask her about the “barbiturates” joke sometime.)

Tim said he writes about “collisions in cultures” in his “comedic-noir” books with titles that sometimes raise eyebrows. His newest...*Beating the Babushka*.

Cara told how her Paris-based (Aimee Leduc) detective novels began – from a woman’s story about being a child in Occupied France. Cara also said she was inspired to write by the famous French novelist Romain Gary, who offered her a cigar and an Espresso, and asked her, “Why not?”

Bobby McCue and Linda Brown from the Mystery Book Store had a good supply of these authors’ books on hand and readily recommended firsts in series or their favorite reads.

A good time was had by all.

Photos and article by Jackie Houchin

New Technologies Workshop Pleases the Crowd

The sessions were fabulous!” commented Gay Kinman regarding the chapter’s New Technologies workshop, which was held in January, in the DISKov-ery Center in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo.

Two sessions, one led by board member Pamuela Samuels-Young on Publisher and PowerPoint programs and another on podcasting and book trailers run by Robert Gregory Browne, attracted an intimate and enthusiastic group at the hands-on, all-day event.

Based on a post-event survey, the workshop garnered high marks in location, size, and instruction. Participants stated that the class size should remain small so that their questions could be individually addressed. Some even desired a more in-depth, longer

hands-on workshop.

In terms of future new technologies workshops, these topics were suggested:

Improving basic word processing skills in Word
Basic session on the internet and new technologies
Building a mailing list for promotion through the internet

How publicity can be built through the internet

If you are interested in any of these topics or any others, please contact Naomi Hirahara at speakers@socalmwa.com. (Please contact Naomi also if you are open to teaching a class.) If there’s enough interest, we may plan for other workshops. But we need your input!

DON'T GET BYTTEN: [Bully for Cyberspace](#)

There's a new hysteria in America. Road Rage is passe. Video games have proven too lucrative to continue the attack. Rap music is already sold with caution labels. Cigarettes are now seen as more disgusting than lepers.

You can almost hear someone cue Helen Lovejoy on *The Simpsons*: "Won't someone please think of the children!"

The new boogeyman is, well-- the Internet, I guess. At least, that's what it looks like to me.

This quasi-Luddite fearmongering takes place under the guise of something called "cyberbullying" (or "cyber bullying"-- the fearmongers haven't seemed to create any uniformity to their bandwagon, as yet). According to literature provided by a number of sources, including the National Crime Prevention Council's website, cyberbullying is the practice of bothering someone online.

Before I continue, I ask you to think about that, just for one second. We're all members of an organization created solely to share the written word. If you're reading this, you're probably a writer. These yokels, the ones who broadcast fear and distrust in the form of 'cyberbullying,' would have Americans agree that there is "bad" writing, and "good" writing (and not in the editorial sense, either! heh). The scare-bringers want to appoint someone (I'm guessing *themselves*) the arbiters of what should be written and what should be quashed.

If that doesn't scare you more than the notion of someone calling someone else bad names on the Internet, I don't know what would.

Anyway, I have several problems with the entire anti-cyberbullying campaign, and they go beyond the simple First Amendment arguments I'm sure we all agree on.

Here are some of my qualms about the cyberbullying hysteria:

It uses a bizarre, Kitchen Sink approach in defining "cyberbullying." Depending on what sources you use, cyberbullying can include everything from posting an insult on an online forum, to sending someone an e-mail calling them ugly, to engaging in predatory

pedophilic behavior. This kind of tactic, lumping seemingly-innocuous behavior in with the potential for vile, brutal rape, disgusts me; it is the shoddiest of marketing techniques. Supposedly, we, the public are going to see some anti-cyberbullying material, and immediately agree that anything having to do with pedophilia is bad...and, therefore, we'll agree with any campaign to disallow little Janey and Johnny sending mean e-mails to each other. One has *nothing* to do with the other, and any advertising that tries to make that connection is cheap and reprehensible.

It presupposes that children are so delicate and fragile that they cannot read a bad word without suffering permanent, significant emotional and psycho-

logical damage.

This is beyond idiotic-- it goes against everything we were taught just a couple generations back.

When I was growing up (and it

wasn't *that* long ago), schoolyard monitors and adults of every stripe were quick to tell us that, "sticks and stones will break your bones, but names will never hurt you." Well, evidently, words have now taken on those tangible properties that were previously the sole province of lumber and minerals, and can whallop you good. I think we underestimate our kids if we believe that they cannot withstand written taunts.

The possible chilling effect on the language and the conduct of interpersonal communication is so frightening as to terrify me. We *finally* are getting children to *want* to read and write. Between J. K. Rowling and MySpace, we may be able to actually experience a generation of Americans who dig the written word. Now these...well...*assholes* want to come along and tell kids to stop having fun reading and writing. (Of course, I am well aware that I have become a cyberbully by calling fearmongers "assholes." This is called "irony," and is a time-tested literary device. I will make that case when I am arrested for Naughty Internet Writing.)

Finally, I am perturbed that some Nervous Nellies want to hamper the arms race that kids have been de-

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veloping for years, an escalation in tease-combat that has kept pace with the technology...and they want to halt the progress just as the younger, smaller, weaker, *smarter* kids were about to get the upper hand. Until now, the big and strong kids have been unchallenged, allowed to reign supreme among children. They could taunt and humiliate other kids without fear of retaliation, because there was no venue for any counterattack. Well, who is going to dominate a cyberschoolyard? The big, strong kids? I think not. It is a meritocracy of intelligence, humor, and finesse. And the Nanny-Wannabes would take this *away*? Look...I'm a *writer* doing a *computer* column....how big a Geek Factor do you think I rated in high school? I sob for the current generation of nerds if the fearmongers have their way, and the weak kids are disarmed before the Kid Conflict has a chance to hit parity.

Bah-- when someone tells you about the dangers of cyberbullying, or your school board goes to adopt some "protective measures" against cyberbullying, or

you see an otherwise intelligent person ranting about how some kid was cyberbullied, remember that you are part of a profession that owes everything to the written word, and that there has never, ever been anyone, anywhere, killed, maimed, or even truly hurt by a word.

This is not a security threat. At least, not in the way they would have you believe...the real threat is from those who purport a desire to protect us.

And keep in mind: the small, weak, smart kids, the ones who would benefit most from *being* cyberbullies...well, they're the ones more apt to buy and read our books.

- Ben Malisow

Ben's first book, 1,001 Things To Do If You Dare, was launched by Adams Media in April. His second, a book on counterterrorism from Chelsea House, is due out next year. Ben has provided computer and information security services to DARPA, the Department of Homeland Security, and the FBI, among other customers. He holds an MBA, a CISSP and a CISM, among other alphabet-soup-flavored goodies.

Joan Lowery Nixon Award Needs You!

Mystery Writers of America and its MWA:Reads program is gearing up for the 2008 Joan Lowery Nixon Award for mystery fiction writing and we're looking for a few good judges.

Now in its third year, the Joan Lowery Nixon Award mystery writing contest is a skill-based contest in which students use their imaginations and their language arts skills to create their own unique mystery stories. The contest has two Categories: Grades 2-5 and Grades 6-10. There will be two \$250 cash prizes awarded, one for the Winner in each Category.

Judging is scheduled to take place the four weeks following the submission period of Feb. 3 – 28, 2008. If you have the time and would like to contribute to MWA's literacy outreach program by judging our popular contest, please contact Rod Johnson as soon as possible at rodjohnson@earthlink.net or (323) 953-1542. You don't have to be a YA author, but you must be a member in good standing with MWA.

Sponsored by Mystery Writers of America, MWA:Reads (formerly Kids Love a Mystery) brings together authors of juvenile and young adult mysteries with children, teens, parents, teachers, and librarians in a nationwide celebration of mystery writing and reading that fosters literacy, deductive reasoning, and critical thinking skills.

FRESH BLOOD

New Active Members: Donis Casey (Tempe, AZ), Dennis Palumbo (Sherman Oaks, CA), Toby Posnanski, writing as Toby Marlowe (Las Vegas, NV), Jennifer Ashley, pka Ashley Gardner (Phoenix, AZ)

New Affiliate Members: Jeff Boxer (Marina del Rey, CA), Donna Hoshida (Sahuarita, AZ), Jacqueline Vick (Santa Clarita, CA)

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Transom Notes

Congratulations to our chapter's 2008 Edgar Nominees

Wendelin Van Draanen – for *Sammy Keyes and the Wild Things* – Best Juvenile

Scott Frank – for *The Lookout* - Best Motion Picture Screen Play

Barbara Seranella (posthumously) – for *Deadman's Switch* - Simon & Schuster, Mary Higgins Clark Award

New Deals, Publications and stuff like that

Burl Barer, authorized by the Estate of Leslie Charteris to pen new *Saint* adventures, will novelize a TV pilot screenplay for world markets. James Purefoy will portray Simon Templar in the new *Saint TV* series produced in Australia and Germany. Burl's 2003 *Broken Doll* was recently re-released by Kensington as a True Crime Classic. <http://burlbarer.net/>

Gayle Bartos-Pool has a short story called "Glitzville" in *Little Sisters* Volume 1, a new anthology published by Shannon Road Press. <http://www.spygame.org/>

Bruce Cook's latest book, *Blood Harvest*, will be published under the pen name Brant Randall. *Blood Harvest* is a standalone fact-based mystery and has the distinction of being the first hardback published by Capital Crime Press. <http://www.brucecookonline.com>

Mystery writers and other self-employed people need help with taxes and keeping good financial records, so Penguin USA has just released *Teach Yourself Bookkeeping in 24 Hours* by Tucson member **Carol Costa**. <http://www.carol-costa.com/>

Stark House Press will reprint the first two books in Mercedes Lambert's Whitney Logan mystery series. **Lucas Crown**, <http://lucascrown.com/>, announced that the omnibus will be published under their Noir Classic line and contain an introduction by award-winning author Ken Bruen. Lambert, whose real name was Douglas Anne Manson, died in 2003 at the age of 54. Last Fall, Five Star Mystery posthumously published her third Whitney Logan mystery, *Ghosttown*, with an introduction by **Michael Connelly**. With this Spring's publication, the entire *Dogtown* trilogy will be in print for the first time ever. In addition, Hayakawa has acquired Japanese rights to *Ghosttown*, *Soultown*, and *Dogtown*, as well as *El Nino*, which Lambert wrote under her true name.

Hannah Dennison has a new series featuring Vicky Hill, a twenty-something reporter working on a country newspaper in rural England. *A Vicky Hill Exclusive!* (Berkley Prime Crime) will be out on March 4th. <mailto:hannahdennison@daviselen.com>

Robert Fate's first novel, Anthony Award nominee, *Baby Shark*, has been optioned for the movies by Hollywood producer Brad Wyman, best known for producing *Monster* (starring Charlize Theron and Christina Ricci). <http://robertfate.com>

Bill Fitzhugh's novel *Pest Control* has been optioned for a Broadway musical and is being developed as a radio series in Germany. Bill is really going international—A Romanian publisher has inquired about the translation rights to *Pest Control*, *The Organ Grinders*, and *Heart Seizure*. Meanwhile, *Pest Control* and *Cross Dressing* are still in development hell at Warner Brothers and Universal. <http://www.billfitzhugh.com/>

The Hidden Man (Mortalist Books/Random House), the second in **Anthony Flacco's** Nightingale series will be released this spring. The first book, *The Last Nightingale*, was published last June. <http://www.anthonyflacco.com>

Elizabeth Gunn's first southwest novel, *Cool in Tucson*, featuring police detective Sarah Burke, will be published February 1st by Severn House. The trade paper edition of *Mccafferty's Nine*, Elizabeth's seventh Jake Hines procedural, is just out from the same publisher. <http://www.elizabethgunn.com>

Rodney Johnson's first screenplay, *Queen Sized*, starring Nikkie Blonsky (Hairspray) and Annie Potts

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aired on Lifetime recently. Teleplay by Rodney Johnson and Richard Kletter & Nora Kletter, story by Rodney Johnson.

Evan Kilgore's *The Children of Black Valley* will be released by Bleak House Books in July, 2008. When his son is kidnapped, a mid-level pharmaceutical executive must cross the world to an abandoned nuclear silo in the jungles of Africa to uncover the demons in his past and the truth about his identity. <http://www.evankilgore.com>

Ken Kuhlken's fifth Hickey family mystery, *The Vagabond Virgins*, will be available in February from Poisoned Pen Press. The story takes place in 1979 when a Holy Virgin appears in Mexico, dedicated to the overthrow of the corrupt and tyrannical PRI. <http://www.kenkuhlken.net>

M2M, otherwise known as **Michael Malloy**, has a new *Scotty* mystery for children. *The Golf Ball Mystery* is scheduled for the January 27th edition of the Los Angeles Times Kids Reading Room page. He's also signed a contract with Top Publications for *The Exploits of the Second Mrs. Watson*, a new collection of Amelia Watson stories. <http://www.michaelmallory.com>

Severn House has published **Andrew Neiderman's** *Life Sentence* in hard cover and it will be published in trade paperback in June. *Deadly Verdict* will come out in March. Andrew is currently developing his novel, *Angel of Mercy*, as a feature film featuring Khandi Alexander of CSI Miami. <http://www.neiderman.com/>

Pat O'Donnell's latest book, *Of Doggerel and the Dean* (iUniverse), has garnered several positive reviews. <http://www.patrickodonnellbooks.com>

Twist Phelan's short story, "Floored" is coming up in the next issue of *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. <http://www.twistphelan.com/>

Gary Phillips announced the first installment of what he calls his "political murder mystery satirical serial", *Citizen Kang*, which is currently on *The Nation's* website: http://www.thenation.com/doc/20080107/citizen_kang_epl. You are invited to add your comments.

Harry Shannon has several new novels coming in 2008, the first of which, *Daemon* (Delirium Books), will be out in March. <http://www.harryshannon.com/>

Betty Webb's new Lena Jones mystery, *Desert Cut* (Poisoned Pen Press) will be released February 5th. She'll be signing on February 22nd at the Mystery Bookstore and Book 'Em, and on February 23rd at Canyon Hills Library in Anaheim, and Book Carnival in Orange. Betty also has a new series coming out in March, also with PPP. <http://www.bettywebb-mystery.com>

Appearances, Articles, Interviews, Podcasts and Such Like

Ben Malisow, our *Don't Get Bytten* columnist, will be appearing live and in person at the February 3 meeting of Sisters in Crime, L.A., to talk about computer security, government contracting, and the writing biz. The meeting is at 2pm at the South Pasadena Public Library. <http://www.benmalisow.com>

Sue Ann Jaffarian and Tony Burton's, Chief Editor of Wolfmont Publishing, fund raiser-signing at the Mystery Bookstore last December, "Carols and Crimes," raised over \$1600 for Toys for Tots, an increase over the previous year. <http://www.sueannjaffarian.com/> <http://wolfmont.com/> <http://www.toysfortots.org/>

Eric Stone and Bleak House Books' year-end fund raising drive for American Assistance for Cambodia (an organization that helps keep Cambodian girls in school and out of brothels) has so far raised enough money to keep 17 girls in school for a year. <http://www.ericstone.com> <http://www.bleakhousebooks.com/> <http://www.cambodiaschools.com/>

A Q&A with **Robert S. Levinson** is set to appear in either the March or April issue of *Writers Digest*. Bob welcomed 2008 with word of another short story sale to *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, as well as placement of a story in the "Amazon Shorts" program. <http://www.robertslevinson.com>

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Gary Brandner will be one of several MWA members signing their work, past and present, at the 29th Annual Paperback Collectors Show and Sale on Sunday March 30 at the Guest House Inn in Mission Hills. Gary's appearance is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. He also has a short story, *Words, Words, Words*, in the anthology *Dark Delicacies II*.

A regular on Matt Alan's Outlaw Radio USA, **Burl Barer** is heard worldwide on the Internet Saturday from 3-6pm at <http://www.outlawradiousa.com>. MWA members are encouraged to contact Barer to come on the show and hawk their books. <http://burlbarer.net>

NEA's Big Read program, has had children's mystery author **Bruce Hale** (The Chet Gecko Mysteries series) hopping all over the country. Many cities have chosen Dashiell Hammett's *the Maltese Falcon* for their Big Read book. Hale's Edgar-nominated *the Malted Falcon* is seen as noir-lite for kids and he's been traveling from Pleasanton to Rochester to Dubuque, introducing young readers to his green gumshoe, Chet Gecko. <http://www.brucehale.com>

Doug Lyle has been honored by the Florida chapter, who have asked him to be the Forensic Guest of Honor at SleuthFest 2008. <http://www.dplylemd.com>

Jeri Westerson recently had her very first interview for her book, *Veil of Lies*, in a podcast at <http://www.chivalrytoday.com>, (show #16.) <http://www.jerwesterson.typepad.com>

Classes and Other Events

Gay Toldt Kinman will lead a class on **Saturday, January 26th** at Joslyn Center in Story Park, Alhambra, on *How to Write a Mystery*. Gay's class includes: Who are the characters involved? What are the elements involved that make up every mystery story? What are clues and red herrings, suspects, forensic evidence, circumstantial evidence, and how reliable are eyewitnesses? To register: <http://www.cityofalhambra.org>; <http://gaykinman.com>

Eric Stone will be conducting the MWA – Mystery Bookshops Writer's Workshop on **Thursday, February 7**, 7pm, on the subject of "The Book Tour: Rules Of and Tales From the Road. <http://www.ericstone.com> <http://www.mystery-bookstore.com/blog/>

On **Saturday, March 8th**, Media Bistro in Los Angeles will host a day-long seminar with Sharlene Martin of Martin Literary Management and MLM Director of Acquisitions, **Anthony Flacco**, who also writes non-fiction books and novels. The topic: How to write effective queries and winning book proposals. Media Bistro has approved a \$50.00 discount for Writers Guild members. <http://www.mediabistro.com/courses/cache/crs3540.asp>. <http://www.anthonnyflacco.com>

Further congratulations are in order

The American Author's Association presented a Silver Quill award to **Alan Cook** for his novel, *Honey-moon for Three*. <http://alancook.50megs.com/>

Bruce Cook's international thriller, *Philippine Fever*, was a finalist for the USABookNews Best Thriller of 2007. <http://www.brucecookonline.com>

Duane Daum's book, *Fortune Cookies*, has been selected as a finalist for an Eppie award. The Eppie is like an Emmy for eBooks.

Deborah J. Ledford's suspense thriller *Staccato* made it to the semi-finals of the Tru TV (formerly Court TV) Crime Writer contest, which was featured on gather.com. <http://www.deborahjledford.com>

Sheila Lowe's mystery, *Poison Pen* (Capital Crime Press), featuring handwriting expert Claudia Rose, was a finalist for the USABookNews Best Mystery of 2007. <http://www.sheilalowe.com>

Twist Phelan's latest Pinnacle Peak mystery, *False Fortune*, has been nominated for the Rocky Award at Left Coast Crime 2008. <http://www.twistphelan.com>

Compiled by Sheila Lowe, sheila@sheilalowe.com

The Crime Calendar

Love is Murder—Feb 1-3, Chicago, IL <http://www.loveismurder.net/>

Murder in the Magic City—Feb. 9, Birmingham, AL <http://webpages.charter.net/southernsisters/aboutmmc.html>

Sleuthfest—Feb. 28—Mar. 2, Ft. Lauderdale, FL <http://www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm>

Left Coast Crime—Mar. 6-9, Denver, CO <http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2008/>

Kansas Writers Association's Scene of the Crime Conference—Apr. 11-13, Wichita, KS <http://www.kwawriters.org/sceneofthecrime.htm>

Malice Domestic - Apr. 25-27, Arlington, VA, www.malicedomestic.org

Festival of Mystery—Apr. 28, Oakmont, PA <http://www.mysterylovers.com/books/events/20080428festival.php>

Edgars® Banquet—May 1, New York, NY <http://www.mysterywriters.org/pages/awards/index.htm>

Mayhem in the Midlands—May 22-25, Omaha, NE, <http://www.omaha.lib.ne.us/mayhem/index.html>

Murder in the Grove—June 6-7, Boise, ID, www.murderinthegrove.com

Bloody Words—June 6-8, Toronto, Canada, bloodywords.com

International Mystery Writers Festival—June 12-22, Owensboro, KY <http://www.newmysteries.org/>

Hardboiled Heroes & Cozy Cats—June 13-14, Dallas, TX, <http://www.mwasw.org/>

Deadly Ink—June 20-22, Parsippany, NJ, www.deadlyink.com

Book Passage Mystery Writers Conf.—June 26-June 29, Corte Madera, CA <http://www.bookpassage.com/content.php?id=44>

Thrillerfest—July 9-10, New York, NY, <http://www.thrillerwriters.org/thrillerfest/>

West Hollywood Book Fair—Sept., W. Hollywood, CA, www.westhollywoodbookfair.org/

Killer Nashville—Aug. 15-17, Nashville, TN, www.killernashville.com

Bouchercon 39—Oct. 9-12, Baltimore, MD, <http://www.charmedtodeath.com/>

Cape Fear Crime Festival—Oct., Wilmington, NC, www.capefearcrimefestival.org/

Magna cum Murder—Oct. 24-26, Muncie, IN, www.magnacummurder.com

The Great Manhattan Mystery Conclave—Oct. 31—Nov. 2, Manhattan, KS, www.manhattanmysteries.com

New England Crimebake—Nov. 14-16, Lowell, MA, <http://crimebake.org/index.htm>

Tony Hillerman Writers Conference—Nov., Albuquerque, NM

THE MARCH OF CRIME



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The March of Crime is the newsletter of the
Southern California Chapter/Mystery Writers of America
Editor: Eric Stone

To submit material for *The March of Crime*,
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