



The MARCH

of CRIME

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### FEATURE ARTICLE

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### NEXT MEETING:

ADAPTING CRIME NOVELS INTO TV AND FILM

Saturday, September 7

10am-12pm

Studio City Public Library

12511 Moorpark Street, Studio City, CA 91604

More information:  
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Save the Date

September 28

Summer Gumbo Party  
at Bill Fitzhugh's House  
in Woodland Hills  
Details to come!



## The PRESIDENT'S RAP SHEET

Jeri Westerson

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## Chapter Officers

**President:** Jeri Westerson

**VP:** Craig Faustus Buck

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**Secretary:** Terri Nolan

### Board of Directors

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Dennis Palumbo

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## The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

Thank you very much for your warm welcome. As the new editor of *The March of Crime*, I expect there may be a bit of a learning curve, but with so much support behind me, I also know the experience will be rewarding.

Which brings me to something I've been talking about lately: getting involved with your local writing community.

I wish I would've done it a lot sooner.

When I started writing my debut novel five years ago, one of my goals was to learn as much as I could about the publishing industry. For me, that journey started on Twitter and I met writers from all over the world. It soon expanded to in-person meetings when I went to book signings of touring authors and traveled to conferences like the California Crime Writers Conference, Bouchercon and Left Coast Crime. I also joined the MWA and Sisters in Crime.

But believe it or not, I never went to a local meeting of either group until 2013. I had writing friends in all sorts of far-flung places, but I had all but ignored a talented, generous and truly vibrant writing community in my own proverbial backyard.

Thankfully, that's all changed. Between volunteering for the 2013 California Crime Writers Conference and assisting Sally Richards with the SoCal MWA newsletter this year, I'm more involved than ever in my local chapters of both MWA and SinCLA. And you know what? My writing life has become so much richer because of it. Now, as the new editor of *The March of Crime*, I hope to interact with more of you than ever.

*Holly*

*The March of Crime* is the newsletter of the Southern California Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America.

Editor: Holly West

Columnists:  
Dennis Palumbo  
Gregory Von Dare  
John Morgan Wilson

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](mailto:themarchofcrime@gmail.com)

## OVER the TRANSOM



In “Demon Slaves of the Red Claw” **Gary Phillips** teams up two iconic characters first realized in the heyday of the pulps during the Great Depression – The Spider and Operator 5. The Spider, originally created by Popular Publications to be their version of the Shadow, was a fanged dark avenger who soon carved out his own pulpdom identity, spawning two movie serials. And before Bauer and Bond was the first super spy, Jimmy Christopher, Operator 5. His monthly title premiered a year after the Spider in 1934, and included the 13 novel length stories wherein he battled a fascist takeover of the United States in the Purple Invasion.

In this new short story, the two uneasy allies join forces to fight mutated hoodlums attacking Times Square, battle Darwin-defying reptiles and even save the inventor of a water engine. The story is part of 13 original ones in Moonstone’s *The Spider: Extreme Prejudice* anthology. White hot searing pulp goodness available now in bookshops and there’s a limited edition hardcover from the publisher at [www.moonstonebooks.com](http://www.moonstonebooks.com).

Patricia Gundlach interviewed **Tom Sawyer** about the writing end of the television business. The two-part interview can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKYG4eyAK6c&noredirect=1> & <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNejGHdzciI>.

**Kris Neri** will be repeating her popular online mystery & thriller class, *COMMITTING THE PERFECT CRIME: WRITING YOUR FIRST MYSTERY*, for the Writers’ Program of the UCLA Extension School. With extensive, personalized feedback, the 10-week class covers all elements necessary to plan and begin a new crime novel, or to rework a previously completed one. For more information, visit: [www.uclaextension.edu](http://www.uclaextension.edu), or email [kris@krisneri.com](mailto:kris@krisneri.com).

Neri will also be teaching an online 5-week structure class for the Sisters in Crime Guppy Chapter, *MYSTERY & THRILLER STRUCTURE: HOW TO GO FROM PREMISE TO PLOT*, starting Sunday, November 3. With weekly assignments and feedback, students will work through the structures of their current WIPs or other projects. Students must be members of both Sisters in Crime and the Guppy Chapter to qualify for enrollment. For more information, email E.B. Davis [atekba@msn.com](mailto:atekba@msn.com).

Endorsements by Kris’s former students can be found: <http://www.krisneri.com/class-endorsements.html>.

**Sheila Lowe** released a standalone novel of psychological suspense to Kindle on July 23. *WHAT SHE SAW* follows a young woman through the terrifying labyrinth of amnesia, where no one is who or what they appear to be. Although *WHAT SHE SAW* is not part of Lowe’s *Forensic Handwriting Mysteries* series (Penguin), her series characters play an important role in unraveling the web of mystery.



## OVER the TRANSOM

**Robert S. Levinson** has short stories in two new fund-raising anthologies, *THE SOUND AND THE FURRY*, proceeds to benefit the International Fund for Animal Welfare, and *LOVE AND OTHER DISTRACTIONS*, benefiting the non-profit Kids Need to Read organization. *FURRY*, edited by Denise Dietz and Lillian Stewart Carl, offers an original short, "The Dead Detective." *LOVE* features works by 14 members of the Writers Guild of America, including Bob's "Take My Word for It and You Don't Have to Answer," which originally appeared in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*.



**Bonnie J. Cardone's** first mystery novel, *THE BRIDE WORE BLACK*, is now available as an ebook in Amazon's Kindle store. It is the first of a series featuring a female photographer/scuba diver who lives on the California coast just south of Santa Barbara. The next two books in the Cinnamon Greene Adventure Mystery series will be published before the end of the year. Bonnie also has a short story about her series characters in SinC/LA's new anthology, *LAST EXIT TO MURDER*.

**Paul D. Marks's** noir thriller *WHITE HEAT* was nominated for the 2013 SHAMUS Award for Best Indie P.I. novel. *WHITE HEAT* is the first novel in Paul's Duke Rogers P.I. series. Book 2 in the series, *BROKEN WINDOWS*, will be coming out shortly.

**Gay Toltl Kinman's** short story "Hidden Past" was featured *THE BIG ADIOS* west magazine Aug 20-22 (<http://thebigadios.com>) and she was interviewed about her new book *Murder and Mayhem* at the Huntington Library on the internet radio show "Over Coffee" by Dot Cannon from PCC (<http://lancerradio.org>)

**Andrew Kaplan's** *HOMELAND: CARRIE'S RUN* is an original prequel novel that is the official tie-in novel to the award-winning hit TV show *Homeland*. It will be published on September 3 by William Morrow.

Former attorney **Leon Vickman** released his ninth novel, *Spy Who Enjoys Her Work*, a fast-paced international intrigue thriller that takes readers to Rabat, Paris, Istanbul, and many other locales.







## WRITE MIND

Dennis Palumbo

**Writing is easy!**

As many of you know, I used to be a Hollywood screenwriter. But though I'm long retired from show business, I still write—fiction and nonfiction. And after over thirty-five years as both a writer and a therapist who works with writers, I can state one thing with complete confidence:

Writing is easy--as long as you don't have a life.

Let's face it, real life--family, friends, bills, illness, deadlines, etc.--just gets in the way. (And I haven't even mentioned traffic, the weather, politics and agents.) When you consider the daily whirlwind of activities a writer has to negotiate--from dental visits and car-pooling to buying birthday presents and getting the dog groomed--it's a miracle anything gets written at all.

Of course, I'm being facetious--but only slightly. Writers, regardless of talent or aspiration, dwell in the real world. Livings have to be made: food has to be purchased; rent and mortgages have to be paid, children have to be raised. There are friendships to sustain, bosses to appease, rent and relatives to endure.

And decisions to be made. Where to send the kids to school. What homeowners insurance to buy. What to do with Aunt Maria now that Uncle George is gone. Is this neighborhood still safe? Do I really need bifocals? You wanna be buried where?

Not to mention the thoughts, beliefs, and feelings writers live with every day. Call them the subtext of daily life. The hurts, resentments, and doubts. The fears, illusions, misunderstandings. What did she mean by that? Did I say that right? Who does he think he is? I'm such an idiot, why can't I make this work? If only I were smarter, better-looking, more together, more...something.

**“Nobody escapes  
the existential  
dilemma.”**

Hell, why did I read about that schmuck's three-book-deal this morning? Where did I put that notebook? My back's going out again, I can feel it.

Gotta concentrate. Get some work done. I'll start with that scene in the second chapter. The one with the homeless guy. Right after the mail comes. Damn, I forgot, I gotta call my mother this week--there's another three sessions in therapy. Has anybody seen my notebook? No, the other one.

HELP!!!

See what I mean? Real life--the intrusive, constantly shifting yet relentlessly repetitive series of moments that make up a writer's day--is an omnipresent partner in the writing experience, a constant companion. And the only playing field in town.

Like it or not, real life is where a writer lives.

Of course, there are alternatives. Many writers throughout history have sought solitude in which to write. Monks like Thomas Merton. Essayists like May Sarton. Authors of all stripes who rent cabins in the woods, or motel rooms in the Mojave, or villas in Spain. I know a playwright who works alone six months of the year in a fire lookout in Northern California.

But I would argue that even such solitude can't rescue the writer from the restrictions of real life, if we define “real life”--regardless of circumstances—simply as a person's lived experience. Besides, the choice to live alone, or without personal ties of any kind, also has a price tag--its own set of social, psychological and pragmatic concerns. In other words, to quote a somewhat gloomy friend of mine, “Nobody escapes the existential dilemma.”

On that cheery note, I'd like to offer three simple suggestions to help writers deal with the reality of writing in the real world. Admittedly, the first two are pretty conventional, yet also pretty tried-and-true.

*Continued on page 8*



The PRO SHOP

John Morgan Wilson

In each installment of The Pro Shop, John Morgan Wilson interviews a chapter member about crime writing and writing in general. In this issue: **Leslie S. Klinger**.

Leslie S. Klinger is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on those twin icons of the Victorian era, Sherlock Holmes and Dracula. He is the editor of the three-volume collection of the short stories and novels, *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (W. W. Norton, 2004 and 2005), winner of the Edgar for Best Critical/Biographical Work. Les is also the editor of *The New Annotated Dracula* (W.W. Norton, 2008), a similar in-depth examination of Bram Stoker's haunting classic and its historical context. Another monumental Klinger project: the five-volume *Annotated Sandman* series (*Vertigo*), built around Neil Gaiman's graphic stories of fantasy, with Volumes 1 and 2 already published. Les also has a thriving practice in tax, estate planning, and business law and serves in volunteer positions with MWA and other organizations.



Leslie S. Klinger

**JMW:** You're credited as an editor on the collections mentioned above, yet they required enormous research and extensive written text, including commentary. What led you toward this kind of hybrid role, combining editing and writing?

**LK:** I found it to be a natural extension of what I do as a lawyer – a great deal of “nonfiction” writing. I have also written numerous articles on the subject of Sherlock Holmes, published (without pay) in amateur Sherlockian journals. The idea of annotations began with my desire to bring up to date the seminal *Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, edited by William S. Baring-Gould in 1967, probably the most important Sherlockian work ever published. It brought together what was then fifty years of scholarship; I felt that, when I began the project in 1996 or so, that the thirty more years of scholarship should be considered. I find that annotation provides a structure that is comfortable. For example, I recently published *In the Shadow of Dracula*, a collection of Victorian vampire fiction. This followed my standard structure: (1) A longish contextualizing introduction, (2) a short intro for each story (and in this case, author bios), (3) footnotes explaining what needs explaining, and (4) an appendix of additional interesting material.

**JMW:** When and why did you become so interested in Arthur Conan Doyle's iconic sleuth?

**LK:** My fascination with Holmes began in 1968, when I came upon the Baring-Gould book. I was fascinated by the cult of Holmesians, the huge amount of scholarship that had been written over the years by fans, and I wanted in on the game! I began collecting and occasionally lecturing but didn't start writing my own scholarship until the mid-1990's, when I had sufficient leisure time (and a very supportive wife)!

**JMW:** Talk a bit about the similarities and differences between editing and writing, and the satisfactions and frustrations of each.

**LK:** Editing my way is writing, because there are intros and notes that have to be written. In each case, the aim is the same: Be clear, succinct, and if possible, witty (and most importantly, interesting)! With my kind of books, it's the original materials that are the stars – I aim to provide the “bonus tracks” (like on a DVD) that enhance the reader's appreciation and enjoyment of the materials. The frustrations are that there are limits to my time and energy – I have to stop the research at some point and actually write the book!



**JMW:** Given your schedule and prodigious output, could you share a few time management tips?

**LK:** I'm always working on something. It's pretty rare for me to indulge in leisure time that isn't (a) family, (b) the practice of law, (c) volunteer activities, or (d) writing. I like a busy life, and I fill up every waking minute. I am a great believer in just getting to it. If you have a task that you've set for yourself, don't put it off until tomorrow, do it now. I am very organized (and that's the law practice training), with lists in my head and on paper. My motto in life: “When the going gets tough, the tough make lists.” And of course, the tough then begin doing the things on the list and checking them off.

*continued on page 8*



Guest SPOT

S.A. Stolinsky, Ph.D.

## Psychological Diagnoses as Character Hooks

Looking for an effective way to make your characters more compelling? Make your life simple. Pick a personality problem for your characters from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, published by the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-V). It provides the standard criteria and classification of mental disorders and its available on e-book for about \$41, or in stores. It will give you a complete history of your characters: What are his/her symptoms? How does he/she deal with her psychological problems? And how might therapy aid your antagonist? What symptoms caused him/her to do the crime, and what symptoms would aid the protagonist in solving the crime?

The DSM-V will give you a basis, a starting point for understanding your character in a deep and compassionate way, so that whatever situation, problem, conflict you place him or her, they will react truthfully according to the personality problem you've given them.

Leaf around in the book and get some ideas to base your character's behavior. What questions would you ask your antagonist based on these symptoms? How would you be able to tell if therapy could help, or if he or she were an anti-social personality, the therapy would probably do no good at all—they would keep on killing, stealing, cheating, maneuvering.

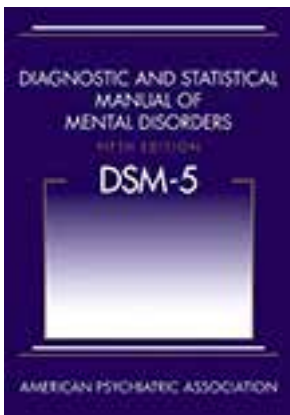
Character flaws help you draw much more complete and well-rounded antagonists/protagonists. Characters' motives often come out of difficult childhoods, or recently suffered losses, disappointments, tragedies, reversals, but it all seems so stereotypical unless you find a "twist" to the way the character handles his problems.

For example, a borderline personality disordered person can be a liar, a fantasizer, a person who splits other people into all good or all bad; an addict, or a manipulator. Your character may need something that feels solid, substantial, secure. Their world has been shifty beneath them. A borderline personality has suffered real or imagined abandonment in childhood, which has ripped their ability to trust anyone or anything. What a tool for your antagonist.

Your antagonist may do things that don't make sense UNTIL you realize that person is a borderline and responds with all that that diagnosis entails. It can be an "ah ha" moment in your work where the borderline goes in a completely different direction recognizing his flaws and using them to find an antagonist, or, if a protagonist, changing a whole personality style that will then aid him in finding the culprit.

So, in the end, the borderline personality learns nothing. Personality traits are stable across the lifetime. But borderline personalities can take hold of their problem by being vigilant to their actions and reactions at all times. What an undertaking. In your piece, your borderline might go against his or her grain and learn new ways of calming down, push him or herself to see situations in a new light, and deal with others in a more realistic way. And you, the writer, have made that all important "change" to the characters necessary for a successful arc to your writing.

*S.A. Stolinsky, Ph.D. is the pen name of an award-winning author of non-fiction and comedy fiction novels. A former actress herself, she writes a series featuring struggling actress Lily Handy, who uses her acting skills to solve mysteries. She's currently working on the second book in the series. She is also a clinical and forensic psychologist who has a private practice in Beverly Hills, CA.*





# Crime CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Saturday, September 7  
10am to 12pm

The Southern California Chapter of Mystery Writers of America  
&  
the Studio City Library

*present*

ADAPTING CRIME NOVELS INTO TV AND FILM



**Nicholas Meyer** (screenwriter of the film based on his NYT best-selling novel, *The Seven Percent Solution* and wrote/directed two Star Trek movies, as well as *The Day After*).

**April Smith** (writer of recent TNT mystery thriller, *Good Morning, Killer*, based on her best-selling novel featuring FBI Agent Ana Gray and writer/producer on TV's *Cagney and Lacey*).

And moderator **Dennis Palumbo** (Formerly a Hollywood screenwriter, Palumbo's credits include the feature film *My Favorite Year*, for which he was nominated for a WGA Award for Best Screenplay. He was also a staff writer for the ABC-TV series *Welcome Back, Kotter*. He is also the author of the psychologist and trauma expert Daniel Rinaldi mystery series. Dennis is himself a licensed psychotherapist in private practice.

Studio City Public Library, 12511 Moorpark Street, Studio City, CA. 91604  
PH: 818-755-7873

This event is FREE. Refreshments will be available.

WRITE MIND *continued from page 5*

First, structure time to write, and make it a fixed, regular time. In his wonderful book *Mastery*, George Leonard asserts--correctly, I believe--that developing mastery of any craft depends on a love of practice for its own sake.

In other words, writing begets writing. Moreover, the discipline of a reasonable, consistent work schedule has a surprisingly liberating effect on one's writing. To paraphrase Thomas Carlyle, "We must have order in our lives to go crazy in our work."

The second suggestion is merely to risk stepping back from life's distractions and re-grouping. (Frankly, to do the opposite of the first suggestion.) Go on a two-week retreat. Cancel all lunches and appointments. To whatever extent possible, exit the duties and responsibilities of your life for just a brief time--even if it's only an afternoon--and try to get back to your authentic core. Eliminate the background noise and see what's there. Because sometimes, as Andre Gregory reminds us in the film *My Dinner With Andre*, "you've just got to cut out the noise."

My third and last suggestion is the most radical of all: Do nothing. Because, in reality, there's nothing to do about it. This is your life, after all. The only one you've got. Your life, your thoughts, your memories, your dreams and hopes, your loves and hates.

What all of it means is best left to philosophers and theologians. What it suggests to me is simply this: Wow, you have plenty to write about. All that stuff going on, and not enough hours in the day--or space in your imagination--to get to it.

Which means, I guess, you better get started. Tomorrow morning would be good.

*Formerly a Hollywood screenwriter (My Favorite Year; Welcome Back, Kotter, etc.), Dennis Palumbo is now a licensed psychotherapist and author of Writing From the Inside Out (John Wiley). He also blogs regularly for The Huffington Post and Psychology Today.*

*His short fiction has appeared in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, The Strand, and elsewhere, and is collected in From Crime to Crime (Tallfellow Press). His acclaimed series of mystery thrillers, Mirror Image, Fever Dream, and the latest, Night Terrors (all from Poisoned Pen Press), features a psychologist who consults with the Pittsburgh Police.*

*For more info, please visit [www.dennispalumbo.com](http://www.dennispalumbo.com)*

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THE PRO SHOP *continued from page 6*

**JMW:** I understand there's a first novel on your current list.

**LK:** I have a s-f/mystery/thriller novel that's in its 2nd draft. Wow, talk about hard work! Starting with a blank page and no outline! I have GREAT admiration for fiction writers, and I have no idea whether I'm any good at this.

**JMW:** Any other Les Klinger projects we should look for?

**LK:** Next up: Annotated Sandman, volumes 3 and 4, will come out from Vertigo in 2014, as well as The New Annotated H. P. Lovecraft for W. W. Norton and another anthology of new Sherlockian stories co-edited with Laurie R. King, tentatively titled In the Company of Sherlock Holmes, from Pegasus Books. After that, I have a lot of ideas but nothing sold. Maybe I'll finish the novel!

*John Morgan Wilson is the author of eight Benjamin Justice mysteries and numerous short stories published in EQMM, AHMM, and several anthologies. Simple Justice, which launched the Justice series, was an Edgar winner for Best First. John is a former board member of MWA So Cal and a recipient of the chapter's Distinguished Service Award.*