



The MARCH

of CRIME

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**Sign up now for the 2021 California Crime Writers Conference happening on June 12!**

Guest of Honor this year will be Cara Black. Come see our amazing collection of authors talking about research, romance, and writing about cops in today's world. Our panelists and speakers include **Anne Perry, Rachel Howzell Hall, Naomi Hirahara**, Jeffrey Deaver, S.A. Cosby, and Victoria Thompson.

Please note that the Manuscript Critiques are now closed.

You must be [registered](#) to attend.

The conference needs volunteers for keeping track of time for the panels and presentations, and during panels, culling questions for the panel and monitoring the chat.

They also need volunteers as panelist point persons if tech issues arise for our panelists.

To volunteer, please email Jessica Kaye at [president@socalmwa.com](mailto:president@socalmwa.com).

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**The California Crime Writers Conference** needs volunteers to time panels & feed audience questions to moderators on **June 12**.

If you can help,  
Contact Jessica Kaye at [president@socalmwa.com](mailto:president@socalmwa.com)

**[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THIS FREE EVENT](#)**



## The President's Rap Sheet

Jessica Kaye

June is a strong contender as my favorite month. It is the in-between of spring and summer, which connotes warmth, long hours of sunlight and letting the outdoors beckon to me, even if just to the backyard.

June is also Audiobook Month, dear to my heart but also to an ever-increasing number of mystery writers. Here are a few things you can do to shine a spotlight on your own audiobooks.

Use social media. You have heard this before but social media isn't useful to you just for directly promoting your own work. A great thing about "June Is Audiobook Month" is that you can bring attention to the medium without specifically asking people to buy your book.

It is natural to want to talk about your own books. But studies show that it is effective to have a ratio of more non-promotional posts than ones in which you tout your own work. Otherwise, people tune out the latter type of posts because they are self-serving. To get your message heard, you need to keep interest, and the way to do that is to *be* interesting. A steady diet of me-me-me is not interesting.

The good thing about June is that you *should* mention your audiobooks; just don't do it in every post. Remember to use any or all of these hashtags: #loveaudiobooks, #juneisaudiobookmonth, #audiobooks, #audiobookmonth.

Ask your narrator to promote your book(s) to their followers. Agree to retweet and reshare each other's posts. Your followers become aware of the narrator and their followers become aware of you. This can lead to incremental growth in sales and a gain in social media followings.

Book an appearance on a podcast. With the plethora of podcasts today, you are sure to find more than one with which you, your book and your audiobook will be right at home.

And it's time to dust off your LinkedIn account. Use it to post a useful article you have written, mention a book or other accomplishment, or comment on other people's posts.

All of these venues get your name and your books into more ears and eyes, and that is the electronic equivalent of word of mouth.

I would love to hear from you about how you promote your books and yourself. Please [email me](#) and we will publish some of your ideas.

Jessica

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## SoCalMWA Discussion Group

- Member introductions
- Ideas for book launches & other book promotion
- Publishing insights & tips
- Book deal announcements
- Blog post promotion & discussion
- Book reviews
- Support & Networking
- And more!

[SUBSCRIBE HERE](#)



## The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

Hi Everyone!

On this fine day before Memorial Day, I'm pulling double-duty: Newsletter editor *and* party host. Yes, you heard that right. For the first time in over a year and the first time in our new home, we're hosting a party for our friends and a few family, all of whom are vaccinated. I can't tell you how good that feels.

But I wanted to take a moment to check in with you all. What are your writing plans for the summer? Many of you no doubt have book contracts and will be working hard to get those books finished. Some of us, however, don't have contracts and maybe we haven't been quite as motivated to finish projects as we'd like to be. To me, that's what summer is for—three months of concentrated work with the end goal of FINISHING.

To me, it seems like the perfect time. Publishing slows down during the summer, with lots of agents and editors taking extended breaks. I plan to enjoy my summer but I also want to take advantage of the lull by throwing most of my energy into finishing my WIP. I've been unagented for a couple of years now and while I don't relish the idea of querying again, it's something I need to do in order to accomplish my personal publishing goals. I'd like to begin doing it sometime during the fall.

Whatever your plans are, I hope June brings you the opportunity to accomplish them.

Holly

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

Editor: [Holly West](#)

Opinions expressed herein are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Mystery Writers of America Southern California Chapter.

Contact us at:  
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### Join the SoCalMWA Discussion Group

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

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# FRESHBLOOD

SoCalMWA welcomes its new members

## Dan Bronson



Dan Bronson has had many careers: Associate Professor of English at DePauw University, Senior Story Analyst at Universal, Associate Story Editor at Filmways, Executive Story Editor at Paramount, Writer-Producer of HBO's acclaimed Ed Harris thriller "The Last Innocent Man" and ABC's cult classic "Death of a Cheerleader," and author of the comic memoir CONFESIONS OF A HOLLYWOOD NOBODY and the hardboiled mystery SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME.

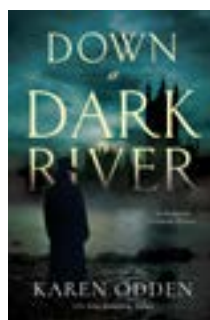
## OVER the TRANSOM

New trade and ebook editions of **Dick Lochte's** recent novels, *THE BODY IN THE BACK SEAT* (previous title: *CROAKED!*) and *BLUES IN THE NIGHT*, are available from Brash Books. *BODY* is a screwball whodunit set in a men's magazine in the Swinging Sixties. *BLUES*, a runner up for the Shamus, is a lightning-fast thrill ride, a witty whodunit and an edgy, no-holds-barred love story that reads like a modern day *MALTESE FALCON* on steroids.

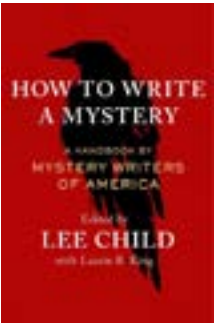
*USA Today* bestselling author **Karen Odden** is delighted to reveal the cover for her forthcoming Victorian mystery, *DOWN A DARK RIVER* (November 9, Crooked Lane Books). In the aftermath of an 1877 legal trial that put three senior inspectors in prison for corruption, the Yard is reorganized but still on shaky footing. Faced with public scrutiny and distrust, Scotland Yard inspector Michael Corraivan, a former thief and bare-knuckles boxer, investigates a series of murders in which the killer places the dead young women in small lighter boats and floats them down the Thames. Visit [karenodden.com](http://karenodden.com) for more info.

**Andrew Neiderman**, who has written V.C. Andrews for over 33 years, has written the biography of one of the world's most well known family thriller and mystery writers, V.C. Andrews. Virginia Andrews' biography is entitled *THE WOMAN BEYOND THE ATTIC* (Gallery Books, February 2022). It will include a partial original novel Virginia never completed as well as never seen pictures and letters. The biography will provide answers to decades long mysteries about Virginia's disability and how much of her personal life is in *FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC*. The origins for the novel, its publishing history and Virginia's dalliance with a few men in her short and incredible life will also be revealed. Much of it is from Virginia's own personal letters and surviving family memories. Plans for the film adaptation are already in the works.

*BUZZ KILL* is **Kate Thornton's** debut mystery novel. With over one hundred short stories in print, she is retired from the US Army, has been a contestant on Jeopardy!, once kissed French film director Francoise Truffaut, and currently lives with her husband, two dogs, and two cats in Tucson, AZ, where she is working on the next Toni Carey mystery. Check it out at her website, [katethornton.net](http://katethornton.net).



## Member APPEARANCES



Monday, June 14, 6 p.m. ET—New York Society Library, with Laurie R. King, Jeffery Deaver, and Charles Todd: <https://www.nysoclib.org/>.

Saturday, July 31, 5:30 p.m. PT— San Diego Writers Festival in partnership with Warwick's (La Jolla, CA), with Lee Child, Laurie R. King, Frankie Bailey, and Neil Nyren: <https://sandiegowritersfestival.com/>.

**Sheila Lowe** has re-released the rest of her Forensic Handwriting suspense series, which gave her time to be a guest on “Chatting With Authors” with **Will Zeilinger** and Janet Elizabeth Lynn. Watch Sheila’s interview [here](#).

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## What If...?

by **Donis Casey**

When I teach classes on research for writers, I spend a lot of time concentrating on the usual things: eschewing anachronisms, maintaining authentic cultural attitudes, avoiding data dumps, gaining information from internet/interview/travel/hands on experience, and so on. But when it comes to historical accuracy in a novel, we can only do the best we can, because history, I’ve come to discover, is fluid.

As a historical mystery novelist, one of my favorite sources for research about early twentieth century America is the newspapers. Before I begin a new book, I spend a fair amount of time perusing the newspapers from the place and time I intend to write about. Nothing is better for discovering what people knew or felt about an event that is historical to us but was happening at the moment to them. Believe you me, what people thought they knew in the fog of the moment was not necessarily what was really happening. Besides cultural attitudes, you can learn all kinds of fascinating information in contemporary newspapers which leads you in directions you could never have imagined on your own. I call this “serendipitous research” —the accidental discovery of something that gives you an idea you would never otherwise have imagined.

Perfect example: I came across this delightful tidbit in the 1913 *Arizona Republic*: “On February 17, 1913, a prehistoric graveyard was unearthed along Sycamore Creek near Prescott containing the skeletons of people who appeared to have been at least 8 feet tall.” There’s an idea just waiting for some imaginative novelist.

How closely must we hew to reality when we write, anyway? I’m not advocating playing fast and loose with history. The reader should never be disturbed or pulled out of the story. Caesar shouldn’t check his Rolex before crossing the Rubicon. But let’s face it, the story is the thing. If you’re going to insist on absolute squeaky-clean accuracy, perhaps you

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## A Fond Farewell

By **Glen Erik Hamilton**

So Long, SoCal.

My family is moving to Seattle. Following some intense negotiations, they have agreed that I can go with them. So, after sixteen years basking in the sun, I'm returning to my hometown and its beautifully overcast skies.

L.A. (well, Burbank) will always be a second home. It's where our child was born, and where my writing career started with daily trips to the Buena Vista Library to scratch in a spiral notebook. That led to classes through UCLA Extension and eventually to publication and joining MWA. My first event was the Gumbo Party at Bill Fitzhugh's in 2014. I couldn't have asked for a warmer and more welcoming bunch of zanies. After a stint as treasurer for Sisters in Crime (hey, they asked first), I jumped into SoCal MWA and was honored to serve as President of the chapter in 2018 and 2019.

It can be daunting to write in the land of Chandler and Grafton and Mosley and Hughes and Macdonald and Connelly and a hundred more pantheon-level masters of the genre. SoCal's members helped me realize we were all fighting that battle against the blank page together. Aid and friendship were just a shout away. I'm tremendously grateful for our community. And I hope to see you all at a convention very soon, now that the world is reopening for business.

Bill Murray has a line in *Ghostbusters II*; paraphrasing: "Only a Carpathian would come back to life now and choose New York... if you had Brain One in that huge melon on top of your neck you'd be living the sweet life out in Southern California's beautiful San Fernando Valley!"

A joke and not a joke. Life here was pretty sweet, and SoCal MWA was a big part of that. Enjoy the sunshine. Enjoy the support. Thanks for everything.

Glen

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Glen Erik Hamilton writes the Anthony, Macavity, and Strand Magazine Award-winning Van Shaw series of crime thrillers. Follow his Northwest adventures at [glenerikhamilton.com/#newsletter](http://glenerikhamilton.com/#newsletter).

### What if...? [continued from pg 5](#)

would be happier writing a history book, or a biography. All fiction authors have an iffy relationship with reality to some extent. Murders happen where none actually occurred. In one of my historical mysteries, I decided that there should be a storm in Muskogee County, OK, on June 3, 1917. I could easily discover what the weather on that day, in that place, was actually like, but why? I've already decided there's going to be a storm in my fictional world whether or not there was one in the real world.

Over my little universe-of-the-page, I am God Herself. In fact, the authors of some novels change major historical events to suit themselves. This is "alternative history" and I love it. I am intrigued by how the past can be reconfigured by an imaginative writer. Witness *FATHERLAND*, by Robert Harris. What if the Nazis had won WWII? In Philip Roth's *PLOT AGAINST AMERICA*, Franklin D. Roosevelt is defeated in the presidential election of 1940 by Charles Lindbergh. Robert Silverberg's *ROMA ETERNA* is actually a collection of short stories, but they all posit the idea that the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt didn't go as planned, and Christianity never became the dominant religion of Rome.

I'd love to write an alternative history some time. But rather than change the outcome of world events, I think I might alter the past on a much more personal level. What if the circumstances of my birth had been exactly the same, but I had been born a boy instead of a girl? What sort of life would I have lived? I am the perfect age for the Viet Nam draft. How would that have played out?

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**Donis Casey** is the author of *VALENTINO WILL DIE*, the second episode (following *THE WRONG GIRL*, 2019) of a fresh new series starring Bianca LaBelle, heroine of the silent screen action serial "The Adventures of Bianca Dangereuse," as well as ten *Alafair Tucker Mysteries*, set in Oklahoma during the booming 1910s and featuring the sleuthing mother of ten children.



## The LAST WORD

"Her skin was cold and her pulse weak, and as I drew my hand away I felt the stickiness of blood and noticed that her arm lay at an odd angle. 'My god, what happened?' I whispered."

—Karen Odden, *A DANGEROUS DUET*