



Inside this issue

- [President's Rap p 2](#)
- [Editor's Corner p 3](#)
- [Over the Transom p 4](#)
- [Member Apearances p 5](#)
- [TV Writing Advice p 6](#)
- [Last Word p 7](#)



With online events the norm—at least for now—SoCalMWA is looking for a tech-savvy person (or a tech committee) to handle our remote events and/or social media accounts.

\* You don't need to be on the board to volunteer \*

If you have Zoom and/or Crowdcast experience, or, if you've got social media skills and want to help out, please [email SoCalMWA President Jessica Kaye](mailto:SoCalMWA@presidentjessicakaye.com).

**IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR**

With board elections coming up, it's time for SoCalMWA members to think about running.

Serving on SoCalMWA's board provides an opportunity to share your expertise, network, get to know our members, and to give back to the community.

To learn more, [email SoCalMWA President Jessica Kaye](mailto:SoCalMWA@presidentjessicakaye.com).





## The President's Rap Sheet

*Jessica Kaye*

Ah September, where summer begins its transition to more summer—but during months that have autumn names.

Bouchercon may have been virtual but nominees and winners of the Anthony Awards are very real and were just announced. A hearty congratulations to all and especially to our SoCalMWA nominees.

During these warm days, ask yourself a question: would you like to be more involved in SoCalMWA? Do you have ideas for panels and other virtual events? Maybe even live events, when that option returns? To have input into all things SoCalMWA?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, consider running for the board of directors or serving as an officer. Later in the fall, when it might actually feel like fall, we will have our annual election. Please feel free to reach out to anyone on the board to express your interest.

You don't have to be a board member to be heard, of course. Email any board member or office with your thoughts, wishes, ideas, even complaints about SoCalMWA. We are stronger when everyone who wants to be heard can be heard.

We also need volunteers, in addition to the board. For example, over the past year and a half, technology has become more vital to our Chapter than ever.

I thank **August Norman** for his tech expertise over the past few years. He will be stepping down at year's end.

In Norm's place, our immediate need is to have a techie or techies who can step up to assist with our virtual events, social media, and our website revamping project. If you have these skills, any of them, we need your help.

Usually this is the time of year we get together for the gumbo party in the beautiful home and yard of **Bill** and Kendall **Fitzhugh**. The Delta variant of Covid-19 has put the kibosh on it again. It is always a wonderful event but a risk/benefit analysis said not this year. We can raise a beignet to our hosts for parties past and for parties future.

For now, though, please still stay safe.

Jessica

## CHAPTER OFFICERS

**President:** [Jessica Kaye](#)  
**VP:** Jennifer Younger  
**Treasurer:** [Sarah M. Chen](#)  
**Secretary:** [Travis Richardson](#)

### Board of Directors

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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

After a productive summer, I find myself in a creative rut. Mostly, I'm overwhelmed by world and local events, coupled with continued COVID concerns—you know, pretty much what everyone else is overwhelmed by. And, as we all know, things could be far worse.

I try to be upbeat in this column because that's how I try to live my life. Which doesn't mean denying my feelings or pretending things are A-okay when they're not. But it does mean that I'm proactive when it comes to my mental health and a big part of that is being goal-driven and approaching life with gratitude.

How does this help in my writing life? In a couple of ways, actually. First, I'm routine-oriented, so I stick closely to my daily To-Do list. I don't always get everything done but I get a lot closer to accomplishing my goals when I've got them written down in front of me.

It takes me about thirty days to write a short story without feeling rushed. About a month before my deadline, that story is integrated into my To-Do list, with daily required word counts, time for outlining and research, etc. I haven't quite honed my timeline for novels yet but I'm working on it.

Second, my creativity is enhanced when I feel good about myself, so two things (beyond work and other essential duties) top my daily To-Do list: exercise and therapy. I consider both of these luxury items but to be honest, if I don't do them, living in my head becomes increasingly difficult.

Recently, I watched a series of YouTube videos on story structure, specifically, about the choices our characters make after a story's inciting incident. Basically, it's human nature to avoid pain whenever we can, and where pain can't be avoided, we choose the least painful path. While this was a discussion about writing, I find it applies to real life as well. For example, exercise is painful for me—I don't like getting up early to fit it into my schedule and it's tiring while I do it. But I've learned that *not* doing it is even more painful. And so, I exercise.

Therapy is much the same.

I'll admit, the work I do to keep myself on an even keel is sometimes exhausting. It's tempting to simply live life without giving too much thought to it. But this isn't how I'm made—I require more effort. And maybe it's not how you're made, either. That's why I tell you this stuff.

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.

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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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## OVER the TRANSOM

EXPLORING DARK SHORT FICTION #6: A PRIMER TO RAMSEY CAMPBELL is available September 7 through publisher **Dark Moon Books**. The latest volume in this series showcases six of Campbell's short stories (one written exclusively for this Primer) along with academic commentary by Michael Arnzen, PhD; interview with author; essay; and more, all beautifully illustrated by artist Michelle Prebich. Ramsey Campbell has been given more awards than any other writer in the field, including being made an Honorary Fellow of Liverpool John Moores University for outstanding services to literature, and is hailed by The Oxford Companion to English Literature as "Britain's most respected living horror writer."

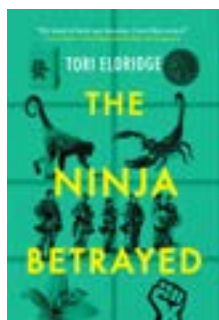
**Tori Eldridge's** THE NINJA BETRAYED, book three in the Lily Wong mystery thriller series, releases September 14 from Polis Books/Agora. Things get personal for Chinese-Norwegian modern-day ninja Lily Wong in Hong Kong when she dives into the dangerous world of triads, romance, and corporate disaster during the height of the pro-democracy protests. [More info.](#)

**Aaron Philip Clark's** crime thriller, UNDER COLOR OF LAW, is an Amazon First Reads selection. Beginning September 1, the Kindle version is available free to Prime Members for the entire month ending on October 1.

CHARACTER IS WHAT COUNTS, **Jonathan Brown's** historical fiction book about the life of Vince Lombardi, just dropped, available wherever you buy books. Jonathan also writes the Lou Crasher series (Down and Out Books) and CHLOE is the first in his "Badass Women" series (Level Best Books). Currently, he's penning a western and another Crasher novel titled: DRUMMERS GUNS AND MONEY.

**Andrew Kaplan's** new book, BLUE MADAGASCAR, has won the 2021 Global eBook Award for Best Thriller Novel of the Year.

IN TWILIGHT'S HUSH by **Laurie Stevens** is a finalist for Killer Nashville's Silver Falchion Award for "Best Investigator."



## Member APPEARANCES

**Tori Eldridge** celebrates the launch of *THE NINJA BETRAYED* with several SoCal authors and bookstores:

[Mysterious Galaxy](#) with **Jonathan Maberry** on September 15, 7 p.m. (in-person/virtual). [Book People](#) with **Naomi Hirahara** on September 22, 4 p.m. (virtual). [Book Soup](#) with Elle Marr on September 28, 6pm (virtual). Visit [Tori's website](#) for a full schedule of events.

**Ellen Byron, Dennis Palumbo, Tori Eldridge,** and Margot Kinberg will celebrate their new releases with an in-person event at Book Carnival on September 25 at 2 p.m. The address is 348 S. Tustin Street, Orange, CA 92866.

Left Coast Crime recently announced that former chapter president Glen Erik Hamilton will be a guest of honor and **Ellen Byron** will be toastmaster at the Left Coast Crime 2023 convention, "Trouble in Tucson."

**VIRTUAL BOOK TOUR**  
**TORI ELDRIDGE**  
**LILY WONG #3**

<b>TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 - 5PM PT</b> Murder by the Book w/ Cassi Dornes	<b>WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 - 6PM PT</b> Book People w/ Naomi Hirahara
<b>WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 - 7PM PT</b> Mysterious Galaxy w/ Jonathan Maberry (Hybrid in-person signing and virtual)	<b>SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 - 2PM PT</b> Book Carnival w/ Ellen Byron, Dennis Palumbo, Margot Kinberg
<b>THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 - 5PM PT</b> Fighting Books w/ Dan Berling	<b>TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 - 6PM PT</b> Book Soup w/ Elle Marr
<b>SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 - 4PM PT</b> Poisoned Pen Bookstore w/ J.J. Etkin	<b>TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12 - 5PM PT</b> Cook Library w/ Tracy Clark, Cheryl Head, Rachel Hancock Hall
<b>SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 - 4PM PT</b> Read 4 Plead to Stop Violence Against Women (excerpt from <i>The Ninja Daughter</i> )	<b>SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17 - 4PM PT</b> The Book Room w/ Lisa Unger, Jonathan Santolucito, Lee Rader Day



Sheila Lowe

About ninety people came together to celebrate the release of **Sheila Lowe's** *DEAD LETTERS*, the eighth Claudia Rose novel. Sheila will continue the celebration with an appearance on Frank Zafiro's ["Wrong Place, Write Crime"](#) podcast on September 9.

**Holly West's** recent interview of Australian writer Tessa Lunney about her new book, *AUTUMN LEAVES, 1922*, was featured on the [Do Some Damage blog](#) in August. You can watch the interview [here](#).

## ADVICE FOR TV WRITERS: WRITE THE LYRICS

by **Tom Sawyer**

Some years ago, I received a piece of valuable professional advice that I feel has not been sufficiently shared with my fellow WGA and MWA members.

I was lunching with a pair of young freelancers whose names, I'm sorry to say, I've forgotten. Veterans compared to my at-the-time "just breaking in" status, I was eagerly picking their brains for tips on pitching, relating to staffers, etc. As we were finishing and about to leave the deli, they volunteered an afterthought that turned out for me to be a gem: "Listen, Tom, another thing, when you get a drama episode to write—you know, like a detective series—whenever your protagonist drives his car, or goes into, like, a nightclub, write song lyrics that can be coming from the stage, or his car radio. The producers'll have 'em set to music, you join ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers), and you'll collect royalties on top of your residuals."

I nodded, thanked them, we went our ways—and I promptly forgot about that suggestion. For about two years.

It was almost dinnertime when my phone rang. It was Producer Bob van Scoyk, calling from Universal. I had just submitted the first draft of my first teleplay for a new, not-yet-on-the-air mystery series. The episode was titled "Broadway Malady." It was about characters involved in a big new Broadway musical in rehearsal, and at several points in my stage directions I indicated that players were to be rehearsing in the background. My initial thought was that there was a problem with my script. But Bob quickly allayed that: "No, Tom. We love it. I just have one question. Where you say they're rehearsing, do you want us to write the lyrics, or do you—?" I cut him off as the memory of that advice came pouring back; "I'll do it, Bob. Thanks."

About fifteen minutes later, it was done. I'd knocked out a pastiche of Broadway Show Lyrics: "I can open doors for myself now, thankyouverymuch," and like that. I sent them off, joined ASCAP. I've collected tens of thousand of dollars in royalties over nearly four decades. I recently received a check for \$140.

Obviously there's a lot of luck involved. For starters, the new series was *Murder She Wrote*. And, immersed as I was in the challenges of the still new-to-me mystery genre, and the privilege of writing for *the* Angela Lansbury, that old advice had not entered my consciousness. Plus, you aren't always going to be writing for a show with the afterlife of MSW. But hey—network!

\*\*\*

**Tom Sawyer** is an Edgar & Emmy-nominated screenwriter, novelist, playwright, and Head Writer and Showrunner of *Murder, She Wrote*, for which he wrote twenty-four episodes. He's sold and written nine network series pilots. He wrote and directed the feature-film comedy, *Alice Goodbody* and is the co-librettist/lyricist of *Jack*, a musical-drama about JFK which has been performed to acclaim in US & Europe. He authored bestselling mystery/thrillers THE SIXTEENTH MAN and NO PLACE TO RUN. His latest novel is A MAJOR PRODUCTION!, second in the Barney Moon, PI series. His memoir is THE ADVENTURES OF THE REAL TOM SAWYER and he co-authored its companion book: 9 BADADSS SECRETS FOR PUTTING YOURSELF IN LUCK'S WAY. More at [thomasbsawyer.com](http://thomasbsawyer.com).

The  
LAST WORD

“Darling Cruises was one of the better choices for travelers with hip replacements and bad knees—in other words, my clientele.”

—DROWNED UNDER, Wendall Thomas