

JANUARY 2023

From the President

Happy New Year!

It's a privilege to ring in 2023 with this fabulous group of crime writers and readers.



Capitol Crimes has been invaluable to me as a writer, offering inspiration from successful authors, tips to hone my craft and most of all camaraderie. Where else can you meet writers obsessed with planning the perfect murder?

My 2023 New Year's resolution (other than to research, plot and draft a new book) is to serve you — the members of Capitol Crimes — and continue to make our SinC chapter a place to learn, thrive and discover great writing.

The board has planned a wonderful line-up of events for 2023. Our monthly meetings will continue to be on Zoom so we can draw experts from any time zone and reach members from as far away as Canada and Ireland.

Over the next few months, we will feature a chat with literary agent [Lori Galvin](#) and learn outlining techniques from Agatha Award-winning author [Ellen Byron](#) (WINED AND DIED).

In March, our favorite hostage negotiator/treasurer [James L'Etoile](#) (DEAD DROP) will wrangle former San Francisco Police sergeant [Adam Plantinga](#) (NOTHING LIKE EASY) and FBI-trained forensic artist [Robin Burcell](#) (WRATH OF POSEIDON) into spilling their own writing tips and the secret to getting the cop stuff right.

We've also tweaked a couple of our regular features.

Last year we started informal gatherings at local bookstores as a way to meet face-to-face again as well as showcase Sacramento's great, independent bookshops. They were a huge hit. But *Coffee Hour* failed in one aspect — we never served coffee.

What's Inside

Upcoming Events..... 2

Chapter News 3-4

- The Secrets to Attracting a Literary Agent with Lori Galvin
- Meet the Author with Terry Shepherd
- The Organics of Outlining with Ellen Byron
- Retreat with Yasmin Angoe

Member News 5-7

In Other News 8





The newly christened *Crime Time* will take place every other month, when we will meet with booksellers, talk writing and crime, and hopefully buy some books. (Bonus: we usually continue the party at a nearby eatery.) This month, we'll go Downtown to check out the charming [Capital Books](#).

In alternating months, our beloved former president Penny Manson will host *Meet the Author*, shining a spotlight on a Capitol Crimes member and his/her/their latest release. This slightly retooled version of Book Club is a great way for our reader members to find new authors. And if you're a member of Capitol Crimes with a book release in 2023, be sure to [sign up](#) to be a guest on *Meet the Author*.

Don't miss February's chat with [Terry Shepherd](#), whose new book CHASING KARMA comes out Jan. 13.

Most exciting of all, Capitol Crimes will present a three-day, in-depth writing retreat with developmental editor and award-winning author of *HER NAME IS KNIGHT* [Yasmin Angoe](#) from Oct. 26-29. Creating memorable characters and writing tension and suspense are some of the craft elements she'll be helping you with. Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for more details!

My goal as president is to make Capitol Crimes as valuable to you as it has been for me. Our Board needs to know what you want. Need clueing in to planting clues? Trying to make your short story shorter? Want to know more about self-publishing, marketing, or both?

Let us know! Send suggestions and ideas to:
capitolcrimes@gmail.com

—Jennifer Morita, President



Upcoming Events



THE SECRETS TO ATTRACTING A LITERARY AGENT with LORI GALVIN

Saturday, January 21, 2023 @ 1:00 PM (PT) • Zoom

CRIME TIME at CAPITAL BOOKS

Sunday, January 29, 2023 @ 2:00 PM (PT)
Capital Books, 1011 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

MEET THE AUTHOR – TERRY SHEPHERD

Tuesday, February 07, 2023 @ 7:00 PM (PT) • Zoom

THE ORGANICS OF OUTLINING with ELLEN BYRON

Saturday, February 18, 2023 @ 1:00 PM (PT) • Zoom

Visit www.CapitolCrimes.org for details and to register.

**JANUARY
2023**

Chapter News

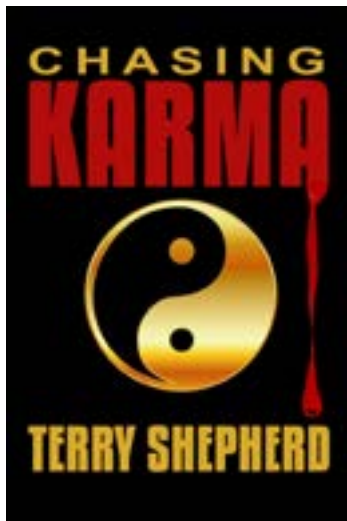
THE SECRETS TO ATTRACTING A LITERARY AGENT

Join us on **Saturday, January 21, 2023 at 1pm (PT) on Zoom** for a lively Q&A with **literary agent Lori Galvin**. We'll be talking with the Aevitas Creative senior agent about what she looks for in a potential client, querying dos and don'ts, crime fiction trends, the submission process and how recent publishing headlines have impacted her writers. One of her clients, acclaimed author of ALL HER LITTLE SECRETS Wanda Morris, recently signed a deal with Showtime, so we will talk a little bit about going from book to screen.



Lori Galvin represents both adult fiction (especially women's fiction and crime fiction) and non-fiction (memoir, food writing, and cookbooks). Based in Boston, a few of her clients and their projects include Kwame Onwuachi's Notes from a Young Black Chef (Knopf '19); Hannah Kirshner's Water, Wood, and Wild Things (Viking '21), Cambria Brockman's Tell Me Everything (Ballantine '19), and Wanda M. Morris's All Her Little Secrets (Morrow, '21). A few of Galvin's client's projects have been optioned by A24 and Netflix.

[Click here to register.](#)



MEET THE AUTHOR

Don't miss our first 2023 Meet The Author on **Tuesday, February 7, 2023, 7:00-8:30 PM (PT), Zoom** when we discuss Terry Shepherd's third installment of the Jessica Ramirez Thrillers as Jess comes face to face with destiny.. [Register here.](#)

A hostage drama with a psychopath turns out to be the tip of an iceberg of intrigue and deception that leads our Jess and Ali to a secret with international implications.

America's favorite "badass Latina cop," is back with the ensemble cast readers have come to know and love. And whenever Jessica is doing the chasing, the twists and turns never stop.

Terry Shepherd created Detective Jessica Ramirez in 2019, publishing his thriller Chasing Vega in 2020. Chasing the Captain appeared in August of 2021. Jess will appear in the short story, "Traction" in the 2023 Malice in Dallas Anthology. Her thrillers have been translated into Spanish and are also available as audio books. The third installment in the trilogy, Chasing Karma debuts January 13th, 2023.

Terry is also a prolific book narrator and audio-artist, hosting the popular Authors on the Air podcast. He and his wife, Colleen, co-wrote Juliette and the Mystery Bug, teaching kids how to protect themselves from Covid-19. Colleen and Terry live and write on the ocean in Jacksonville, Florida.

For more information visit: TerryShepherd.com



**JANUARY
2023**



Chapter News

REMINDER TO RENEW/JOIN CAPITOL CRIMES

Tis the season to renew your Capitol Crimes membership!

In addition to camaraderie with fellow crime writers and readers, here are a few members-only perks to joining our fabulous Sisters in Crime chapter:

- Event discounts
- Access to video recordings of Capitol Crimes meetings and events including chats with authors and experts about writing, marketing, publishing and querying.
- And we'll promote your book releases, awards as well as short story publications through our newsletter and on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

Give your writing a boost in 2023. Join or renew your Capitol Crimes membership [now](#) to take advantage of all our chapter has to offer.



Save the Date! You Won't Want to Miss This!

Registration will open in January, but you'll want to start planning now! This in-depth craft retreat will include critique of your work, individual time with Yasmin, sessions on:

Writing Characters that Thrill
Writing Plots that Hit
Pacing Conflict, Tension, and Suspense

and more, plus time to dedicate to your writing in a beautiful, peaceful setting with fellow writers. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for more information soon!

JANUARY
2023

Member News



From Marie Sutro –

In December, Marie Sutro was deeply honored to win the Best Suspense Novel in the 2022 Authors on the Air Book of the Year Awards for her new novel, DARK OBSESSIONS. If you missed the fun, you can catch the entire show on Authors on the Air's YouTube channel:

<https://soundcloud.com/authorsontheair/the-2022-book-of-the-year-awards-ceremony-on-authors-on-the-air>

Facebook: mariesutro

Twitter: mariesutro

Instagram: marie.sutro



From Richard Meredith –

Maskirovka—The Russian Science of Deception made the Top 100 Indie Novels of 2022 by Kirkus Reviews. [Read the article here.](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/richardmeredithbooks>

Twitter: @SactoWriterRick

Instagram: Sacto_WriterRick



From Patrick Whitehurst –

In 2022 I began writing dark tales for *Adrenaline Shot Comics* and am pleased to announce I will script an audio tale for the publisher in the coming months. Each story is hosted by the fiendish Mistress Morphine and features a short story designed to chill the blood! [A link to my last comic book script can be found here.](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/patrick.whitehurst.3>

Instagram: @whitehurst12



From Michele Drier (NorCal President) –

Available now - the MWA/SINC Holiday Recipe Book!

[Click here to get your copy.](#)

From Loy Holder (EGWG President) –

Want to see what writerly events are happening in the Sacramento region? [Check out the new Collaborative Calendar ceated by The Elk Grove Writers Guild here.](#)

**JANUARY
2023**



Member News

Choosing a Tarot Deck for Writing Prompts: Four Things to Seek Out and One to Avoid

by Jessica Cline / Jessica Arden

After hearing Lisa Kessler's fabulous talk at our November meeting, I know I wasn't the only one excited to try tarot cards as writing prompts. I've always been interested in the history and practice of tarot, and cards frequently feature in my books. However, the idea of using the artwork and meanings behind them to dig deeper into characters or spark ideas about conflicts, inner turmoil, secrets, and character relationships was new to me. I've been collecting and playing with various decks ever since and highly recommend it.

But if you're new to tarot, and overwhelmed by all the options out there, how do you choose a deck that will work best for you? Since I've already fallen deep into that rabbit hole, here are my insights:

- 1 Find a deck that speaks to you personally:** The most important factor in choosing a tarot deck is finding one that resonates with you. The artwork should capture your imagination and fire up your curiosity. Take some time and look through different decks to discover one that feels the most right for you. I even found a Cute Ghost Tarot deck I've been using for my cozy paranormal books.
- 2 Consider the genre and tone of your writing:** It's important to choose a tarot deck that syncs up with your voice and works in progress. If you're writing a dark, atmospheric book, like a thriller or police procedural, consider a deck like The Dark Wood or Tarot of the Haunted House (two of my personal favorites, both by Sasha Graham). Some others that fall into this category are Edgar Allan Poe Tarot, The Lost Forest, and Horror Tarot.

For a lighthearted, whimsical mystery, you might go for something with more playful artwork. Decks with furry friends, familiars, and paranormal creatures abound. You might also nab a deck that connects to your protagonist's hobby, profession, or the story's setting. Is your sleuth investigating a murder on the set of a reality dating show? Draw some inspiration from The Final Rose tarot deck. Got a protagonist who's into plants or who runs an apothecary? Try the Seed Sickle Oracle or Antique Anatomy.

Some other quick vibe suggestions: Looking for something cerebral or something with kickass feminine energy? Channel the literary masters with The Literary Witches deck or The Modern Witch. Like shadowy fairytales? Check out the Little Red Riding Hood Deck, Rackham Tarot, or the Dark Wood.

If you're delving deep into the psyche of your characters, try a shadow deck. These decks explore the unconscious, shadowy side of ourselves. They're an excellent tool to get into your villain's and suspects' heads as well as add layers of complexity to your protagonist. The Dark Wood is a shadow deck, and I also recommend the Threads of Fate Shadow Oracle cards.

- 3 Look for a deck with rich imagery:** Tarot cards are all about symbolism and imagery, so choose cards with evocative illustrations. Some are beautiful and com-

JANUARY
2023

Member News

plex (Cirque du Tarot). Some are downright bizarre (hello, Madhouse Tarot). Having plenty of visual cues will help you get the most out of your writing prompts.

4 Shop around: You can find tarot decks at a variety of places, including one of our local indie bookshops, online retailers like Bookshop.org, Amazon, Etsy, Hay House, or even on Kickstarter. Check Etsy and Kickstarter if you're into premium, artisan-created decks with elaborate artwork. You can also find lower-priced playing-card-sized decks on sites like eBay, AliExpress, or Wish if you can wait a month for shipping and want the variety of multiple decks without breaking the bank.

One Caution:

When you search for decks, you'll undoubtedly come across those themed for a TV show, movie, or series that holds a special place in your heart. I've seen Supernatural, Stranger Things, Disney Villains, The Labyrinth, and Golden Girls decks to name a few. However, as tempting as those can be, I've found them less useful. For the purpose of creating our own work, the close associations with another existing narrative can be distracting and counter-productive.

I hope this guide was helpful if you're in the market for a deck of your own to recharge your creative thinking. I'm looking forward to Lisa's Tarot for Writers class this month, and I hope to see some of you there.

Please drop me an email at jessica@jessicaarden.com and let me know if you've found a specific tarot deck you love or if you'd like a personalized deck recommendation. Happy New Year!

www.jessicaarden.com | Newsletter: <https://jessicaarden.eo.page/vn4zx>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/jessicaardenauthor>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/jessicaardenwrites/>



From Lorie Lewis Ham-

Two Christmas mystery short stories went up on Mysteryrat's Maze Podcast in December.

The Afternoon Before Christmas by Mark Murphy, and read by local actor Sean Hopper

<https://mysteryratsmaze.podbean.com/e/the-afternoon-before-christmas-by-mark-murphy/>

And Saint Nicked by Herschel Cozine and read by local actor Larry Mattox
<https://mysteryratsmaze.podbean.com/e/saint-nicked-by-herschel-cozine/>

You can also find them in all the usual podcast places!



**JANUARY
2023**



In Other News:

Mickey Finn: 21st Century Noir, vol. 5, opens for submissions February 1-28, 2023. Full guidelines here: <http://www.crimefictionwriter.com/submissions.html>

Murderous March - March 10 & 11, 2023. Online only. [Click here for info.](#)

The New York Write to Pitch 2023 LIVE NYC, March 16-19, 2023. [Click here for info.](#)

Left Coast Crime 2023: "Trouble in Tucson" – Tucson, Arizona. March 16-19, 2023. [Click here for more details.](#)

Malice Domestic - April 28-30th 2023 - Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center in Bethesda, Maryland. [Click here for more information.](#)

California Crime Writers Conference - June 10 & 11, 2023. [Click here to go straight to the Registration page.](#)

Save the Date: **SleuthFest 2023** will be July 6-9, 2023. [Click here for info.](#)

Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference 2023, July 21–23, Corte Madera, California. [Click here for info.](#)

Willamette Writers Conference 2023, August 2-6, online and in-person at the Crowne Plaza in Portland, OR. Many more details to come - [click here.](#)

Killer Nashville Writers' Conference, August 17-20, 2023 - Franklin, TN at the Embassy Suites Nashville South / Cool Springs hotel. [Click here for more details.](#)

Bouchercon 2023: "Murder at the Marina" August 30 to September 3, 2023 at the Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina, California. [For details click here.](#)

Sisters in Crime Grand Canyon Writers proudly present **Fireside Chats! Coming in 2023: March 2** – Helen O'Hare, editor at Mulholland Books, **May 4** – Racheal Herron, "Revising Your First Draft: All the Tools You'll Need." Registration links and exact times of the virtual 2023 Fireside Chats will be announced closer to the event date. [Click here for details.](#)

Noir at the Bar: Monterey - Held monthly at Duffy's Tavern in Monterey, it's a great excuse for a trip to the coast! For more information, call Alec Cizak at 831-644-9811.

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Visit www.CapitolCrimes.org for details.

GOT CONTENT?

Send your press-ready article to: CapitolCrimes@gmail.com
Put "Newsletter" in the subject line. Due by the third week of the month.
We will publish the first Monday of the following month.

**JANUARY
2023**