

CAPITOL CRIMES

Sharing the thrill of mystery.

MARCH 2022

From the President

Hello members and friends!

Spring is nearly here, the daffodils are blooming, the trees are budding, and we've had our first sighting this year of authors in the wild! Our First Ever Capitol Crimes Coffee Hour at Face in a Book in El Dorado Hills was a smashing success. New friends and familiar faces alike joined together to share the joys and challenges of the crime writing life. Cookies that looked too beautiful to eat were devoured. Pandemic survival stories were told. I know that I came away refreshed and renewed, inspired by all of the amazing writers around me to head back to my keyboard and get the stories in my head down on the page. Jim L'Etoile was a warm and welcoming host, and his wife Ann-Marie shared her amazing baked treats and kept things running in the background. I feel so lucky to be a part of this group.

I also want to thank Face in a Book. If you haven't been there yet, it's worth the drive. You won't leave empty-handed, and the staff and owner are huge supporters of local authors. They even created a special display of Capitol Crimes authors' books for the event. They will be the official bookstore for our Killer Workshop as well, and we are grateful for their support.

Our February Members Meeting was also one that people can't stop talking about. I knew that James Keeline is an expert on all things Nancy Drew, but wow! There wasn't a question that he couldn't answer, and it was such a treat to see original outlines of early Nancy Drew books, and to learn about the process the Stratemeyer Syndicate used to create these books that have drawn in readers

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From the President continued

for generations. Thank you, James! We are working on finding a way to make our meeting recordings available to members, and this is one that you will want to watch more than once.

Our calendar for the next few months is filling up nicely, and we hope you will join us however you can. In March, we have our Book Club on March 8th featuring Anne Da Vigo's **Bakersfield Boys Club**. Book Club events will remain on Zoom for 2022, so everyone can attend from the comfort of home. Then on March 19th we'll be doing our first hybrid event live from the Maidu Library in Roseville. You'll be able to join us in person or on Zoom for this event, but if you're in the area, I promise it will be worth getting dressed and leaving the house. Rae Franklin James will be discussing what it's been like to have her book made into a Lifetime movie, coming to your television soon. I can't wait to hear her stories and what she's learned.

Check out our website and the events section of the newsletter for more exciting happenings. But the biggest one of all is our **Killer Workshop**, coming May 14th. Lots of people are working hard to make this event truly one of a kind. There will be in person and virtual options, and both are going to be incredible. Check out all of the details here in the newsletter, and be sure to register this month, because **prices go up on April 1st!!**

—Sarah Bresniker, President



Upcoming Events

BOOK CLUB (*Bakersfield Boys Club* by Anne Da Vigo)

Tuesday, March 8 @ 7:00 PM (PT) • Zoom

From Page to Screen

A Conversation with Rae Franklin James

Saturday, March 19 @ 1:00 PM (PT) • In person AND on Zoom
Maidu Library, 1530 Maidu Drive, Roseville CA



Why Your Book Needs Developmental Editors and Sensitivity Readers with Yasmin Angoe

Saturday, April 16 @ 1:00 PM (PT) • Zoom
(note: changed to Zoom only)

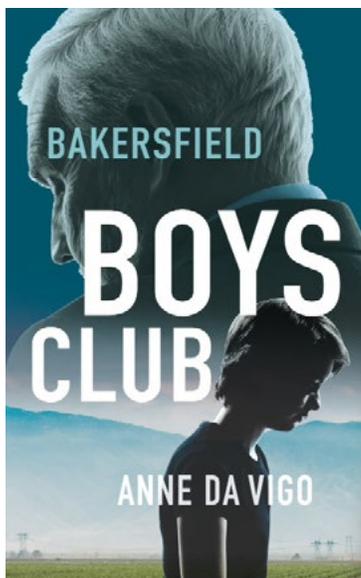
Capitol Crimes Coffee Hour at The Avid Reader

Sunday, April 24, 2022 2:00 PM
The Avid Reader on Broadway
1945 Broadway Sacramento, CA 95818

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

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Chapter News



BOOK CLUB

We are excited about our next Book Club meeting on **March 8, 2022 at 7pm (PT)**, Join us to discuss the crime thriller “Bakersfield Boys Club” with Anne Da Vigo, former journalist specializing in feature writing and crime reporting. “Bakersfield Boys Club” was loosely inspired by the Lords of Bakersfield murders of the 1970s and 1980s. Da Vigo covered the trial in the first of the Lords murder cases. Learn more about the author by visiting her website at: www.annedavigoauthor.com

[Click here to register for this event.](#)



CAPITOL CRIMES VIRTUAL WORKSHOP SERIES

*From Page to Screen
a Conversation with
Rae Franklin James*

March 19, 2022 (1pm-3pm PT)

BOARD CHANGES

We're sad to announce that two of our board members have had to step away from their duties for personal reasons. We're so grateful to Mary Griffith, who served as our Membership Manager, and Michelle Corbier, who served as our Website Manager, for all of their hard work and dedication. Please thank them if you see them at a meeting or anywhere else. They both did great work and left us in very good shape. But their loss means that we are looking for help! Do you have website or spreadsheet skills and would like to get more involved? If so, **please email us at CapitolCrimes@gmail.com**. And Mary is available to train anyone interested in the membership management duties. Organization and patience are the main skills required. We would not expect anyone to jump into a full board position, but rather do some training and learning to see if these jobs are a good fit. I know that we have many talented people out there, I hope you will consider using your skills to give back to your chapter.

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DREAM EDITOR GIVEAWAY*

ENTER NOW
for a chance to win **75 pages of manuscript evaluation from top developmental editor and acquiring editor Terri Bischoff!**

All Early Bird Registrations for the May 14th Capitol Crimes *Killer Workshop '22* will be automatically entered to win this amazing editing package.

*No purchase is necessary to win. You don't have to register to win and registering will not increase your chances of winning. Only one entry per person. The prize is not transferable. The Drawing will be held on April 1st. The winner of the Dream Editor Giveaway will be announced on April 4th in the Capitol Crimes April Newsletter. The winner will be notified via email.

In addition to our fantastic in-person program, which will be held in Rancho Cordova, California, we also have a spectacular virtual program available.

Go to www.capitolcrimes.org/workshop for more information on the workshop, how to register and how to enter the Dream Editor Giveaway.

We can't wait for you to join us in sharing the thrill of mystery!

Ready to Kill . . . at the Killer Workshop?

- Looking for a couple of minions to help with the Killer Workshop
- Do you want to rub shoulders with well-known authors?
- Get on a first-name basis with a local independent bookstore?
- Spend time with other writers in our chapter and in the local literary community?

Have we got a deal for you.

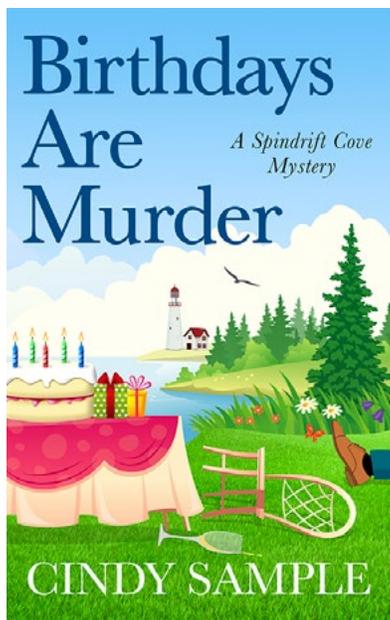
The Capitol Crimes Killer Workshop '22 committee needs a few good women-ions and men-ions to help with volunteers and registration. For more details contact capitolcrimes@gmail.com.

Want Your Books to be sold at The Killer Workshop? Find out how!

We are thrilled to announce that **Face in a Book** of El Dorado Hills has agreed to host a bookstore at our Killer Workshop! Published authors who are current members of Capitol Crimes *and* register for the in-person event before April 1st will have the opportunity to sell their books at the Workshop bookstore. Each author will be limited to two titles. For more details contact capitolcrimes@gmail.com.

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Member News

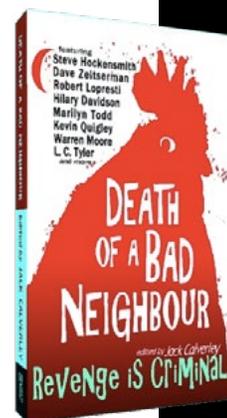


Cindy Sample welcomes everyone to the **LAUNCH PARTY** of *Birthdays Are Murder*, the first book in her new Spindrift Cove Mystery series.

The event will be held on Sunday, March 13th from 1 - 4 pm at **Face in a Book**, at 4359 Town Center Blvd, El Dorado Hills, California.

Birthday cake will be served!

Visit Cindy's website at:
cindy.samplebooks.com



Eve Elliot has a story in *Death of a Bad Neighbour* – an anthology of fifteen all new crime and mystery short stories based on the theme of revenge taken against a bad neighbour by somewhat less than legal means. [Click here to find out more.](#)



Holly West will edit the 2023 Bouchercon Anthology, working title *PERIL UNDER THE PALMS*. Bouchercon 2023—Murder at the Marina will take place in San Diego, California. For more info about the anthology, go to: bouchercon2023.com/anthology/

Visit Holly's website at: hollywest.com

Capitol Crimes members **Claire Booth**, **R. Franklin James**, and **James L'Etoile** are among the invited authors attending the **Sacramento Literary Foundation's Authors on the Move 2022** event at the Kimpton Sawyer Hotel in Sacramento. The black-tie event pairs featured authors with guests to enjoy a farm-to-fork meal together and discuss their writing. During the 2019 *Authors on the Move*, James L'Etoile auctioned the naming rights to a character in *Black Label* and a very generous donation of \$1,200 went to children's literacy programs in the Sacramento Region.

On May 15, 2022, less than a month before the actual California primary, **Low, Down, Dirty, Vote - Volume III: The Color of My Vote** anthology edited by Mysti Berry, consisting of the works of 22 mystery authors will be available from your favorite indie bookstores and Amazon. **Pat Canterbury** has one of her Tanner Sullivan P.I. short stories, "The San Francisco Chinatown Mayoral Caper" included.

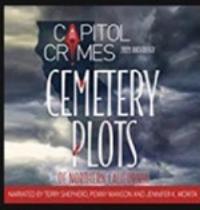
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More News

Cemetery Plots of Northern California is now available as an audio book. Get it now on [Audible](#), [Chirp](#), Apple Books or Google Play!

Thank you to members **Terry Shepherd**, **Penny Manson** and **Jennifer Morita** for narrating and making this audio book possible!



2021 Capitol Crimes Anthology

Now available at **audible**
an amazon company




CAPITOL CRIMES
COFFEE HOUR

Casual Connections
with Crime Writers



**MARCH
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A cabal of crime writers? A murder of mystery writers? We had fun thinking about what to call the group of terrific writers from Capitol Crimes who met at our store yesterday. Hope they come back soon! — *Janis, owner of Face In A Book*

POV - Terry Shepherd's monthly thoughts about The Craft

Terry Shepherd distills ideas about creation, tech and promotion into actionable ideas every author can leverage to build their brand and sell more books.

Gems In The Dirt

Feedback is the breakfast of champions. We grow to the extent we can integrate what's helpful into our craft.

That's not always easy. Our blood pressure goes up when the manuscript comes back from the editor. We feel our stomachs churn when we open a long tome from a beta reader. And few things ruin a day more than a one-star review.



But all these things can show us the way to improvement if we can parse what's helpful and throw out the other stuff.

Here's how. Look for commonalities. Are we spending too much effort on exposition? Are we slipping to tell vs show? Is our dialogue moving the story forward? Are our characters compelling? Do they each have their own story arc? Do the first and last scenes in each chapter make the reader want to keep turning the pages?

These are the fundamentals of excellent storytelling. In the heat of creating our barf drafts, we are so into details that it's easy to forget to pull back and evaluate our work from a distance.

This is what editors and betas are good at. They may not always be able to articulate their sensitivities well. We must learn to decode the meaning and find the common threads.

I keep an Evernote page for every book project I'm working on. As I digest feedback, I'll write down what feels like the developmental message and read my stuff again through that lens. Is it valid? What do I change?

And what about the nasty stuff? It would be nice if all input came from self-actualized humans who understand the power of supportively stated input. But everyone comes with their own set of communication tools. If we can peel back what may sound negative, there may well be diamonds among the dirt.

In my business incarnation, I appreciated praise. But I always learned from the unhappy. Anyone willing to go to the trouble of giving you criticism, constructive or not, is giving you a gift. Ponder it. Integrate what's useful and toss the rest. Receive it in "third person" and don't let it chip away at your self-esteem.

Learn this skill and your stories will improve with each new telling.

Terry Shepherd / Terry@TerryShepherd.com

TerryShepherd.com

Facebook.com/TerryShepherdWrites

Twitter.com/TheTShepherd



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Interesting Reads - a bi-monthly column by member Carol Newhouse

Carol Newhouse is a member of the National Sisters in Crime and the Toronto, Los Angeles, Guppies and Sacramento chapters. She writes stories for inclusion in anthologies, four newsletter columns, and is hard at work on her first book in the Zookeeper Mystery series. When not dreaming of dead bodies or taking virtual exercise classes, she plays competitive bridge, hangs out at the Toronto Zoo, and paints with watercolors. She can be reached at newhouse.carol@gmail.com.



THREE OF THE YEAR'S BEST

This column's Interesting Reads features three books that made my Best of the Year list referring to books I've read in 2021, not necessarily to books that were published that year.

My personal record, compiled annually, contains fiction and non-fiction and is my go to when people ask for a recommendation.

The first, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*, by Haruki Murakami is advertised as a memoir. However when Murakami relates the factors behind his love of long distance running to his love of writing, it reads like a treatise on the writing life.

The chapters in *What I Talk About...* are linked by tales of his running process and practice. Often the reader is left to fill in the blanks or connect the dots between preparing for long distance running and preparing to pen a novel.

Of particular interest to me is his discussion of where talent figures into the constellation of traits which combine to create a writer. Murakami thinks people without much talent can compensate by exercising other traits such as endurance or focus. This is good news for writers like me who find writing does not come as naturally as breathing.

You may agree or disagree with Murakami, but if nothing else, *What I Talk About...* offers a thought provoking read on what it means to be a writer, minus the detailed exposé on craft tips about all of the elements that form a part of any story.

The second book, *The Word is Murder*, by Anthony Horowitz combines a traditional mystery with a "how to write" manual. The murder and its solution spans the usual arc from inciting incident through rising action to the black moment, and ending in a chilling climax, but Horowitz's ideas and descriptions of his writing process are sprinkled throughout the narrative in equal measure.

We learn what he thinks about titles when his character states that he doesn't think of the title before he starts work because in his opinion,

"Titles have to be short, smart, and meaningful, easy to read, easy to remember and original. That's asking a lot...I didn't have a title for my new book. I wasn't even sure I had a book. p. 130

Horowitz outlines extensively and yet the writing comes across as effortless as opposed to contrived.

Interesting Reads continued on next page

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Interesting Reads continued

I found the premise of *The Word is Murder*, that the narrator is the author who plays a Dr. Watson to the main detective, Hawthorne, unique and intriguing. An interesting read indeed.

The third book, *The Pot Thief Who Studied Pythagorus*, by J. Michael Orenduff, served as an entertaining read for me at a time when unreliable narration had taken hold of the mystery field. This is another traditional mystery, where clear, concise and witty prose, pulls the reader into the world of Hubert Schuze, a shopkeeper who liberates valuable pots from the public lands of New Mexico.

An eccentric and endearing cast of characters catches the reader and transports them into this fictional world where even though the starring player routinely bends the corners of the law, we cannot help but cheer him on as he moves forward to sort the just from the unjust and apprehend the murderer.

I found some of the technical questions, such as how the protagonist could liberate a heavily guarded pot from a museum, as absorbing as the overarching question of whodunit.

Humor keeps interest levels high and helps defuse what could become a dark tale.

Orenduff's writing reminded me of Lawrence Sanders' Burglar series, a straightforward rendition told in the first person point of view of an antihero. And while the structure may not break new ground, *The Pot Thief Who Studied Pythagorus*, both comforts and provides readers with an engaging puzzle.

What I Talk About When I Talk About Running, *The Word is Murder* and *The Pot Thief Who Studied Pythagorus* are three on my list of twenty of the Year's Best of 2021.

James D. Keeline



CAPITOL
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Thank you so much James Keeline for the insightful presentation "Plan Like Carolyn Keene" at our February meeting.



For more information about James visit: stratemeyer.org

S.O.S.

916 INK NEEDS YOU!

Mission statement: 916 Ink empowers youth through creative writing.

Calling all volunteers to help volunteer to stuff bags, etc.

Call (916)-826-7323 or email: info@916ink.org

For more information go to: www.916ink.org/volunteer



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In Other News:

Did you publish a book in 2021? If so, you have until **MARCH 31** to enter it in the **NCPA (Northern California Publisher's & Authors) Book Award Competition**. [Click here for more information](#). If you have any questions, please contact Sharon S. Darrow at 916-803-1665, or email sharon@sharonsdarrow.com

Left Coast Crime 2022: Southwest Sleuths. April 7-10, 2022 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. [Click here for more info](#).

Malice Domestic April 22-24, 2022 Conference, Bethesda, Maryland (Live and In Person!) [Click here for more information](#).

Bouchercon 2022, September 8-11, 2022, Hilton 1001 Marquette Ave S, Minneapolis. [Click here for more information](#).

Submit your story for "Hook, Line, and Sinker," **The Seventh Guppy Anthology** by 11:59 p.m. EST on March 10, 2022. (You must be a member of the Guppies to submit.)

SinC into Great Writing series Zoom event: "Your Writing Career: Past-Present-Future." Saturday, March 5, 2022 at noon ET/11am CT/10am MT/9am PT. The seminar includes three panels: "Things I Wish I'd Known," "Publishing in the Present Tense" and "Structures for Success." [Click here for more info](#).

From the **Elk Grove Writers Guild:**

- Save the Date: March 12, 2022 for Joan Gelfand teaching via Zoom: "You Can Be a Winning Writer: The Four Cs of Successful Writers." Tickets are \$20.00 for Guild Members; and \$25.00 for Non-Members. [Details and registration here](#).
- Words and Music at the Chicks in Crisis Campus, 9455 E. Stockton Blvd., Elk Grove, Sunday, May 15, 2022, 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM. [Author registration and ticket sales start March 15, 2022, here](#). \$20 for table space. Bring your own table and chair(s). Share with a friend. The first few Authors signed up for a table can read during open mic sessions. Listen to an author's words, or find that perfect book. Food and Drink by Chicks in Crisis available to purchase. Tickets are \$10.00. Meet the entertainers: Gary Mendoza, Dinorah, Carly Rhoades, Todd Morgan. Capitol Crimes will have a table, please join us with your own table or volunteer at the chapter table.

FOLLOW US, LIKE US - JOIN US!



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.

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