

CAPITOL CRIMES

NEWSLETTER | 2021

Sharing the thrill of mystery.

MARCH 2021

From the President

ALMOST SPRING!

Do you have daffodils? Tulips? Irises? Those signs of spring are popping up everywhere bringing the colors of renewal and hope in their path.



Capitol Crimes has been very busy with our 2021 projects. After a slow start, the [Anthology](#) is a go, the [Book Club](#) is stepping into the future by taking a look at our past and [Members' Marketplace](#) has us considering revitalizing our Capitol Crimes store.

We have another overstuffed newsletter for you this month. I want to especially thank Karen Phillips, our newsletter maven, for its new look and feel. She is endeavoring to keep us informed, and doing the time consuming work of organizing submission requests and scouring the Internet/social media for stories that will interest our readers and writers. If you like this newsletter, please give her a hearty "THANK YOU" when you see her at the next Zoom meeting.

While I am passing out thanks, have you looked at our website? Go right now and take a peek. Go on, I'll wait. www.CapitolCrimes.org. Nice, isn't it?

That was the result of the hard work of the "Tech Team," AKA Sarah "Taming the Wild Apricot" Bresniker, Mary "Membership Directories...it's a thing" Griffith, Marie "I AM Social Media" Sutro, and Karen "In the News...Letter" Phillips. These ladies make us all look good.

Our March speaker Rachael Howzell Hall is hot right now. A featured writer on NPR's acclaimed "Crime in the City" series and the National Endowment for the Arts weekly podcast, Rachel has served as a mentor in the Association of Writers and Writing

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From the President continued

Programs (AWP's) Writer to Writer Program and has served on the board of directors of the Mystery Writers of America. She was named one of Apple iBooks' "10 Authors to Read in 2017."

She is the author of the bestseller and Anthony, International Thriller Writers, and Lefty Award-nominated *They All Fall Down* and the acclaimed Lou Norton series. She is also the co-author of "The Good Sister" with James Patterson, which was included in the New York Times bestseller, *The Family Lawyer*. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and daughter.

Join us on March 21, 2021 for a conversation with RACHEL HOWZELL HALL presented by our own Rae James.

So an Anthology, a new Book Club and Members Marketplace! Oh my! Who's busy? We are! Glad you are along for the ride!

—Penny Manson, President



NAME THE NEWSLETTER CONTEST

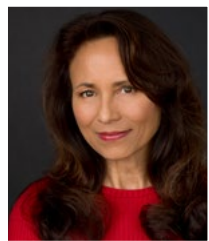
We want to hear from you! Send your idea to CapitolCrimes@gmail.com and the winning name will be announced in the April newsletter.

Upcoming Events



A Conversation with **Rachel Howzell Hall** presented by Rae James

Saturday, March 20, 2021
1:00 pm • Zoom

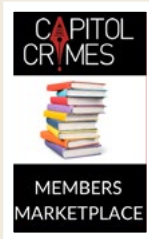
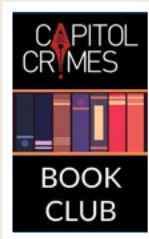


Tori Eldridge on Four Act Structure for Action and Thrills

Saturday, April 17, 2021
1:00 pm • Zoom

Book Club

Tuesday, April 13, 2021
7:00 pm • Zoom



Members Marketplace

Saturday, May 15, 2021
1:00 pm • Zoom

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

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Member News

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

R. (Rae) Franklin James

Out of the gate, 2021 is already starting with a wonderful surprise. My Hollis Morgan Mystery Series was optioned for a movie by a Canadian film studio. Pre-production starts the end of this year in Toronto.

And then there is*THE INHERITANCE*

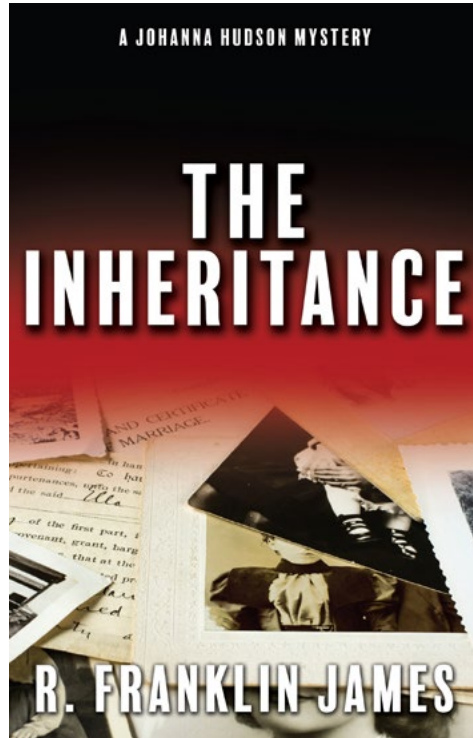
I'm glad to announce that the first book in my new Johanna Hudson Mystery Series *The Inheritance* will be released in April 2021.

Johanna is a 30-year old genealogist with a painful past. She uses her research talents to build family trees for her clients. However, she takes on a customer who is murdered before the ink is dry on the contract.

At stake is a family battle over millions, if the paternity of the true heir can be found and proved — that, and if Johanna isn't killed first. She searches the trail of a broken family tree to find the true heir to a fortune, while outrunning family greed and murder.

You can find *The Inheritance* on [pre-order now at Amazon](#).

I hope you enjoy *The Inheritance*!



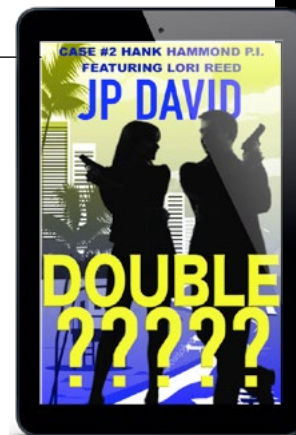
From member JP David –

The second in my *Hank Hammond PI & Lori Reed* series will be released soon! The draft is completed, editing is underway, and the cover has been designed. But there's a hitch: I need a title.

I'm asking writers, readers, fans, and everybody else who loves mystery books to help me choose the best title, and I'd appreciate your help by [clicking this link](#) and voting for your favorite choice. Everyone who helps will receive a free copy of *Options, an intriguing story of greed, power and money*.

The more feedback I get, the better. So please feel free to let other people know.

By the way, the first book in the series, *Double Take*, has a new cover with a theme that will run across all the books in the series.



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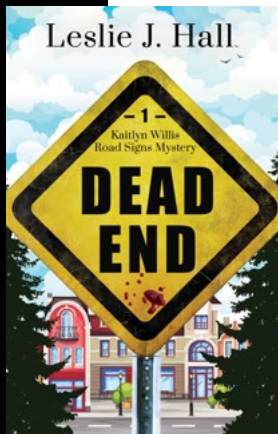
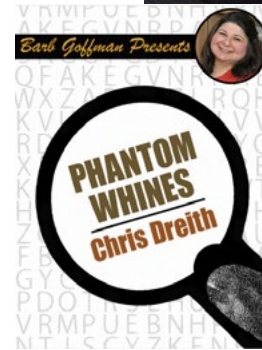
Member News

From member Chris Dreith –

To all you mystery lovers, this wine was my inspiration for my newest story *Phantom Whines*. You can find it in Black Cat Mystery Ebooks! Thanks, Barb Goffman! You are the best.

Phantom wine proudly presented by a great local winery, Bogel Winery.

Phantom Whines, a story involving a Scottish terrier who's doggedly determined to protect his family's winery from intruders, is published by Black Cat Mystery & Science Fiction Ebook Club. Readers interested in purchasing *Phantom Whines* and learning more about the club [click here](#).



From member Leslie Hall –

I'd like to share that *Dead End*, the first book in the Kaitlyn Willis Road Signs Mystery series, is [now available on Amazon](#).

Dead End is a snarky, fun, amateur sleuth mystery. Book two, *Watch for Ice*, will be released in June and book three, *Curves Ahead*, will come out in November.

[Visit Leslie's website to learn more.](#)

From member James L'Etoile –

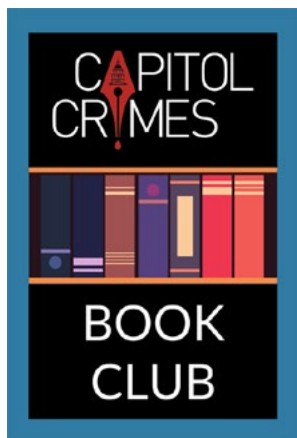
James L'Etoile reports the pandemic forced isolation did have an upside. He signed a four-book contract with Shawn Reilly Simmons of Level Best Books. In the first of four novels, *BLACK LABEL* uncovers a secret and it's costing thousands of lives. Big Pharma and prison gangs make strange bedfellows, but where there's money to be had an uneasy peace exists through an off the books Black Label drug lab. (July 2021)

[Visit Jim's website to learn more.](#)



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Chapter News



BOOK CLUB

[The Capitol Crimes Book Club](#) has a new launch date! Join us for our kickoff meeting at **7pm PT on April 13, 2021**, when our featured author will be Capitol Crimes founding member, and award-winner, Pat Canterbury! We will be reading Pat's fantastic book, *The Geaha Incident*.

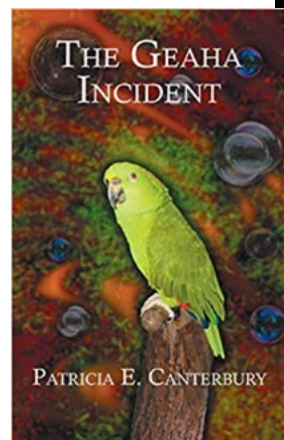
In keeping with our "In the Beginning" inaugural theme, our second meeting will be held at **7pm PT on June 8, 2021**, we will be joined by founding member Terris

McMahan Grimes to discuss her Anthony Award-Winner, *Somebody Else's Child*.

Our fun and friendly community of mystery readers will enjoy the unique advantage of having the subject author at each meeting, bringing a whole new dimension to the experience of each book. Get answers to burning questions such as why this story, why this time, where did that germ of an idea come from? Come to the Book Club and find out.

Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every other month. Additional details, (including registration and links to purchase the books we will be reading) are available on the new Book Club page on the Capitol Crimes website. Authors interested in having the Book Club read one of their works will be able to submit online for the remaining meetings in 2021.

Hope to see you all in April!

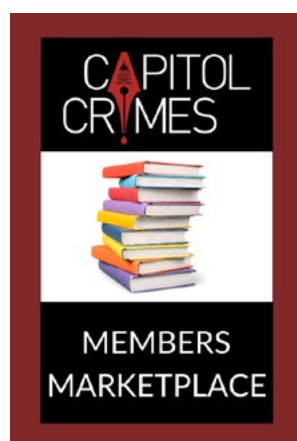


MEMBERS MARKETPLACE

[Apply Now!](#)

A unique opportunity for five Capitol Crimes member/authors to market their books at a Capitol Crimes online meeting for the first time in May 2021.

Whether traditionally or self-published, authors will have up to 15 min to promote their books on Zoom. Authors will be selected through application on a first come first serve basis. What is particularly exciting is that Capitol Crimes will set up a link to a sales portal where buyers can purchase books and the author will send out their book to the buyer—a true marketplace!



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Chapter News

THE WAIT IS OVER – IT'S ANTHOLOGY TIME

Planned for 2020 but delayed by the pandemic, the production of the fourth Capitol Crimes short story anthology is officially underway. The anthology committee is co-chaired by local board member-at-large, Rita Rippetoe and by author Terry Shepherd, who joins us from Florida. The committee has begun the process of recruiting judges, selecting a cover artist and selecting a publisher. Plan ahead for holiday shopping, our projected release date is Thanksgiving.

Some chapter members have already begun their short stories, working with a developmental editor at a workshop last year. But there is still time to craft a story for this 2021/22 volume.

Submissions will be accepted starting April 2, 2021 and will close May 15th.

To submit a story you must be a member of both Sisters in Crime, National and of Capitol Crimes. Stories must be original, no longer than 5000 words. The story must include a Northern California cemetery: an existing cemetery new or historic, or a product of the author's imagination. Complete instructions for submissions will be posted on the website just before the submissions window opens.

Submissions will be blind, only the volunteer receiving the submissions will know who the authors are. Manuscripts will be stripped of any identifying information before being sent to the first panel of judges. Judges will be volunteers who are not members of Capitol Crimes. The first panel will select finalists and a second panel will determine the winners. The final selection will be of up to fifteen stories. Once selected the stories will be given a final polish by a copy editor.

The purpose of the anthology is twofold. We give our members an opportunity to be published and to participate in the marketing of the final product, and we give the public a chance to sample the work of local authors. Everyone involved has opportunities to learn more about writing, marketing and sales.

—Rita Rippetoe, Anthology Committee Co-Chair

Sorry you missed it: Our guest speaker for the February 20 Chapter meeting was Matt Coyle. His latest book is *Blind Vigil*, the seventh book in the Rick Cahill series. *Last Redemption* comes out November 2021. Matt shared the value of using a character bible to keep track of physical traits and scars, why a mentor or writing coach is better for giving feedback on your work than your dad (he mentioned experienced [writing teacher Carolyn Wheat](#)) and for help with Query Letters, invest in [Publishers Marketplace](#). However, by far the best takeaway of the day was his advice to, "Write a good book and don't be a jerk." You can visit Matt on his website <https://mattcoylebooks.com/>



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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Coming Soon: Capitol Crimes Directories

We've teased and promised new directories for members on our website while we've been working behind the scenes to make them happen. We're not quite done yet, but we expect to go live with both the public directory and the member-only directory later this month.

The Wild Apricot system we use to manage our membership and host our chapter website offers directories as an option, and they use the information from individual member profiles to create the directories. So what we've done is added a few new fields to the member profile form: pen names, bio, social media addresses, volunteer interests, etc.

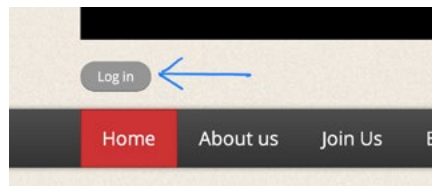
Whether you choose to be included in either or both of the directories is entirely up to you. You can choose from three levels of privacy for each item in your profile. Unless you choose otherwise, items will be private, visible only to you and to our website team. You can leave them hidden, make them visible only to members, or completely public.

We strongly recommend keeping your personal contact info private. There is an option to allow messages to be sent to you without revealing your email, and you can provide links to your own social media sites where you can control your information more directly.

While we finish up the backstage work to create the actual directory pages for the site, here's how to update your member profile to make your information ready for the launch.

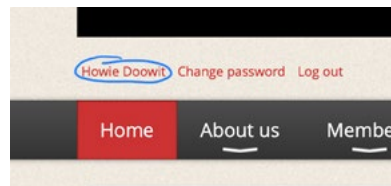
UPDATING YOUR MEMBER DIRECTORY

1. Log in to your Capitol Crimes account.



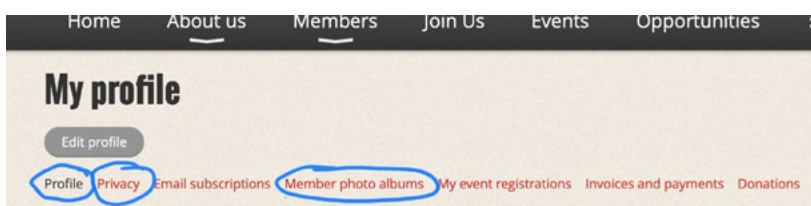
(We're showing our fictional member, Howie Doowit.)

2. Click on your name.



3. Click on a category tab.

The circled items are the ones we're interested in for the directories. When you click on a tab, you'll see the current information for that category. To edit, click on the gray "Edit Profile" button.



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My profile

Save Cancel

Profile Privacy Email subscriptions Donations

User ID 58521844 This field is generated automatically and cannot be changed

First name

Last name

Email

Home Phone

4. Enter or edit your profile information under the “Profile” tab.

My profile

Save Cancel

Profile **Privacy** Email subscriptions Donations

Show profile to others

Details to show
(in member directories, forum and blog posts)

	Anybody	Members	No access
Photo album	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Send message form	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Membership level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
User ID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
First name	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Last name	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Set your desired privacy levels.

Again, use caution about making any of your personal contact information visible. You’ll see a list of all the profile fields, with radio buttons to set the privacy level for each one individually. Note that the most private setting is the column furthest to the right. Some of the non-personal fields are best-suited to be seen by chapter members only, while others (hello, book titles!) you’ll want visible to the public.

6. Create your photo album.

Wild Apricot allows each member to post up to 50 photos, so if you’d like photos beyond just a head shot or avatar (a separate profile item), click on the “Member Photo Album” tab. If you’re a published author, you might want to upload cover photos here; if you’ve got a series (or several series), you can group them in albums of their own separate from any standalone titles, and you can add captions if you like.

—Mary Griffith, Vice President of Membership

CREATING AN EXCEL HISTORICAL DATES DATABASE

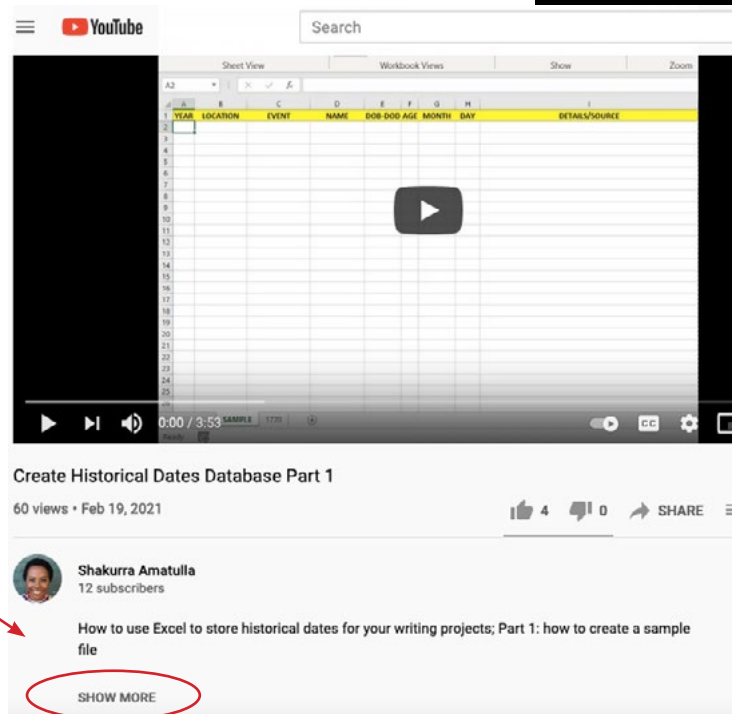
by member Shakurra Amatulla

Keeping track of dates while drafting a crime novel can be quite a daunting task. That typical detective question: "Where were you on the night of August 15, 2019?" and to which a character may reply: "I can't remember!" just won't cut the mustard for a mystery author. Dates are tantamount, be they from the years B.C. to current times. So how can a writer keep track of all of the historical dates, past and current events that unfold in a novel in some kind of chronological order?

To address this problem, I created a simple Excel file database that provides a "one-stop date data dump" for writing projects which I demonstrate in two YouTube videos:

- 1) Create Historical Dates Database – Part 1
<https://youtu.be/2IWxeHrE-ns>
- 2) Create Historical Dates Database – Part 2
<https://youtu.be/ANN5hoymkNo>

Both of these how-to videos include a sample Excel spreadsheet file for download. Click on the "SHOW MORE" to get the link.



In the midst of drafting my own first historical mystery novel, I was going mad trying to wrangle not only the dates and times significant to my characters, but also to consider the real life, everyday events that easily affect their lives. Cataloguing specific events in one worksheet by year(s) affords me a clear map to each character's environment, influenced not only by personal trials and tribulations, but via everyday factors such as political and social atmospheres, fads, celebrities, fashion, attitudes, natural and unnatural disasters, etc.

I see my characters as bread dough being constantly kneaded by the invisible and relentless hands of Life. Therefore, these Excel chronological listings of mine help spark my imagination for plot manipulations and exposes me to more innovative and creative ways to tell Story.

Perhaps this tool of mine will be of some use to you all. I'm anxious to hear your thoughts after trying out this Excel technique. As with any writer's tool, I hope my Historical Dates Database will also serve to help Story grow, mature and succeed.

Follow me -- Shakurra Amatulla -- on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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In Other News:

An exciting opportunity from International Thriller Writers: Virtual ThrillerFest 2021!

Take advantage of this opportunity to participate in Master Class, PitchFest, ConsultFest, and the brand new X-Treme CraftFest! There's no travel, no hotel stay—but you can still hone your craft in small classes taught by ITW bestselling authors, you can learn to pitch your novel with confidence, and get insider details on the business of writing from agents, editors, and marketing professionals. Virtual ThrillerFest XVI will be held on June 28 - July 20. [Click here to learn more.](#)

International Thriller Writers announced a marketing opportunity for ITW members—the First Chapters Program.

Tempt readers with a sampler—the first 1-3 chapters of your novel on a dedicated page, and these chapters will remain on The Big Thrill site permanently. Your “page” may also contain the cover, an author photo, and a brief author bio. ITW will highlight your story on the cover of The Big Thrill, and will also do a social media push for the launch month. Please book early, as only two positions are available per month. Price: \$500. Email Todd Gerber at BigThrillAd@thrillerwriters.org to reserve your place!

As of this writing, Bouchercon 2021 is still on for an anticipated in-person convention in New Orleans, Louisiana for five days beginning August 25, through 29. The annual crime fiction event draws a diverse selection of international authors, publishers, book reviewers, and editors. Sisters-in-Crime traditionally has a significant presence at Bouchercon. You could run elbows with Lee Child over cocktails, or listen in on five days of panels. Pace yourself. Go to: <https://www.bouchercon2021.com>

Please join NorCal SinC, our Sister Chapter up the road for: **“Researching Your Historical Novel or Story: Know What You Don’t Know,”** with Award-winning mystery author James Ziskin Saturday, March 13th March 13 from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm (PST) on ZOOM. A discussion of strategies and resources to root out anachronisms and other historical errors in your fiction. For more information or to register contact: <http://www.sincnorcal.org/>

Malice Domestic: MORE THAN MALICE, a virtual (online) festival, will be held on July 14 - 17, 2021. More info to follow at: <https://www.malicedomestic.org/>

The Editors of the Strand are accepting unsolicited submissions for a limited time period and would love to hear from SinC members. At the moment, their payment rate for stories is \$100-150. Here's the link for guidelines: <https://strandmag.com/guidelines/>

The Elk Grove Writers Guild still plans its Writers Conference in October 2021. Please let us know if you're interested or have questions, by sending an email to: elkgrove.writersguild@aol.com. Someone will get back to you ASAP. We are excited about this event and look forward to hearing from you soon. <https://egweg.org/news/>

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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.

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