



Sharing the thrill of mystery.

FEBRUARY 2022

From the President

HAPPY FEBRUARY!

It has been chilly here in Northern California, but at least the days are getting longer and spring will be here before we know it.



I have one month under my belt as your president, and wow, I've learned a lot in those thirty-one days. Mostly about what amazing members we have. I hope you all enjoyed getting to know our Vice President, Jennifer Morita, at our January meeting. I took lots of notes at her presentation and am working on my elevator pitch!

Among other jobs, Jennifer is our social media guru, and she's doing great things on multiple platforms. If you don't already, please consider following us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#). There are great conversations happening on all three platforms, and if you have something that you'd like us to promote, please let us know either on social media or by email and Jennifer will spread the word. And the more often you all like and especially comment on our posts, the more people will see them.

You have heard us talking about our upcoming Killer Workshop, and I'm sure you're curious to learn more. We have the board and a whole committee working hard to bring it to fruition, and registration will open on February 14th. Something that we are doing for the very first time is partnering with another Sisters in Crime chapter for the event, the Palmetto chapter based in Columbia, South Carolina. They are known for their amazing *Mystery in the Midlands* conference and we are thrilled to be working with them to bring you this brand new workshop. We are especially grateful to Paula Benson, who serves on both boards and is an absolute dynamo when it comes to bringing together topnotch speakers on nearly

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From the President continued

any topic, all while keeping her day job. Please give our South Carolina siblings a warm West Coast welcome!

As we've all gotten to know our fellow Siblings in Crime in chapters across the country thanks to Zoom, we felt it was important to find ways to work together with other chapters. Penny Manson and Paula are spearheading what I know will be a wonderful event for all. Please stay tuned for details!

Until then, our February meeting will be a valentine to my first detective crush and maybe yours, Nancy Drew. James Keeline will be with us to help explain some of the magic behind Nancy, Frank and Joe Hardy, and other creations of the Stratemeyer Syndicate. He also has an amazing book collection that I really wish I could see in person, but will have to settle for Zoom. I can't wait!

Oh, and please keep your fingers crossed that we will be able to have our first completely in person event in quite a while this month! If you're in town, please join us at Face in a Book on February 27th for our first Capitol Crimes Coffee Hour. This is a casual opportunity to meet other authors, so please come and invite your friends.

The rest of our year is starting to fill in nicely, so please take a look at our calendar of upcoming events, and keep writing and reading!

—Sarah Bresniker, President



Upcoming Events



Plan Like Carolyn Keene with James D. Keeline

Saturday, February 19 @ 1:00 PM (PT) • Zoom



First Ever Capitol Crimes Coffee Hour

Sunday, February 27 @ 2:00 PM (PT) In person

Face in a Book Bookstore - 4359 Town Center Boulevard, El Dorado Hills, CA

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) • In person AND on Zoom

Maidu Library, 1530 Maidu Drive, Roseville CA

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

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Chapter News

Plan Like Carolyn Keene

with James D. Keeline

February 19, 2022 1:00-3:00 pm

Most of us grew up reading Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys. How did the creators plan these stories in the first half century of these series? What made them such page turners? Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys have inspired countless mystery readers and writers. Learn some of the secrets of the Stratemeyer Syndicate that helped to make some of the most successful YA mysteries of the twentieth century.

James D. Keeline first discovered Tom Swift books on the family bookshelf when he was 8 and the Hardy Boys soon afterward. From 1988 to 2000 he was the manager of The

Prince and the Pauper Collectible Children's Books where he surprised more than a few with the sad news that no one named Carolyn Keene wrote Nancy Drew.

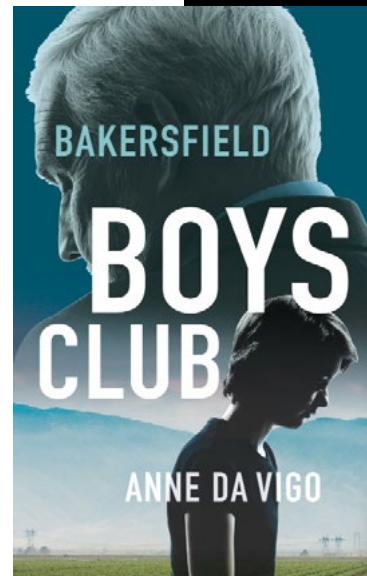
He has become an expert in the Stratemeyer Syndicate and the history of series books. His *Series Book Encyclopedia* will list about 1,300 series published between the 1830s and the 1980s with details on the authors, artists, pseudonyms, ghostwriters, and publishers. His biography of **Edward Stratemeyer** will detail the life and career of the man behind many of the most popular series.

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

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.](#)



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Chapter News

Killer Workshop 2022

May 14, 2022

KEYNOTE:
GREGG HURWITZ

New York Times #1 internationally bestselling author of 23 thrillers!

VIRTUAL & IN PERSON
(Rancho Cordova City Hall, CA)

CAPITAL CRIMES *Sharing the thrill of mystery.*

SACRAMENTO SISTERS IN CRIME PALMETTO CHAPTER

VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Mystery writers and readers get ready!!

Mystery writers and readers get ready!!

This year's Killer Workshop 2022 is going to be bigger and better than ever! Capitol Crimes has partnered with our sister chapter, Sisters in Crime, Palmetto Chapter, to create the most outstanding program we've ever offered!

- Top Name Authors
- Publishing Professionals
- Criminal Investigation Experts

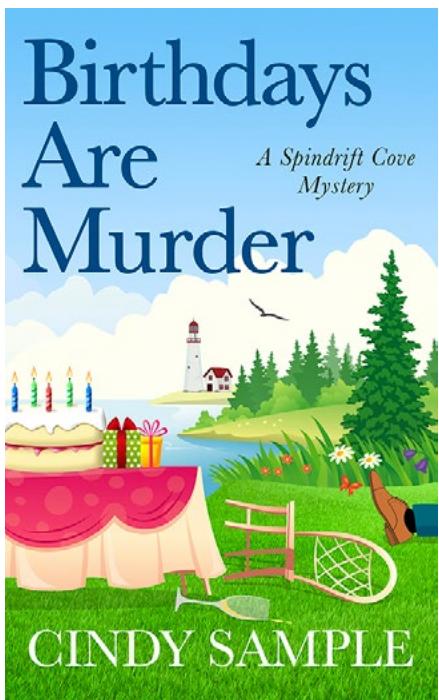
In addition to our fantastic in person program, which will be held in **Rancho Cordova, CA**, we will also have a spectacular virtual program available.

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

Watch for more details coming soon!

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Member News



Cindy Sample would like to announce the release of **BIRTHDAYS ARE MURDER**, the first book in her new Spindrift Cove Mysteries, featuring Sierra Sullivan. **The paperback is already available on Amazon** and the ebook will be released on February 7th on all major retail platforms.

After Sierra Sullivan is furloughed from her cruise director position, she moves to Spindrift Cove, Washington, to be closer to her married daughter. She soon discovers that gigs for middle-aged entertainers are scarcer than good hair days in the Pacific Northwest. With her bank account sliding toward zero, she swallows the indignity of donning a ten-pound wig and elaborate costume to perform at a child's birthday party.

Little does Sierra know she'll soon be upstaged by a corpse and become the leading-lady suspect.

As the bodies pile up, the entertainer adlibs her own crime-solving gig, a performance putting her in the crosshairs of a killer, and a finale that truly may be final.

Visit Cindy's website at: cindysamplebooks.com

CONGRATULATIONS!

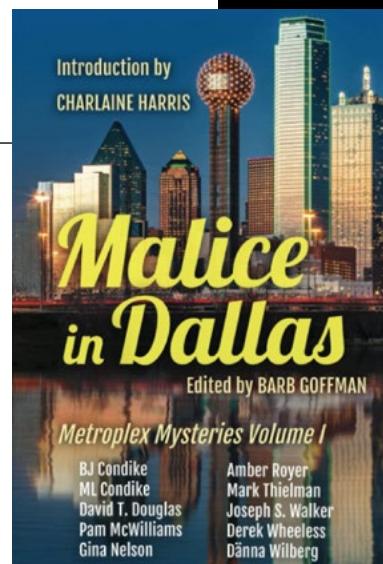
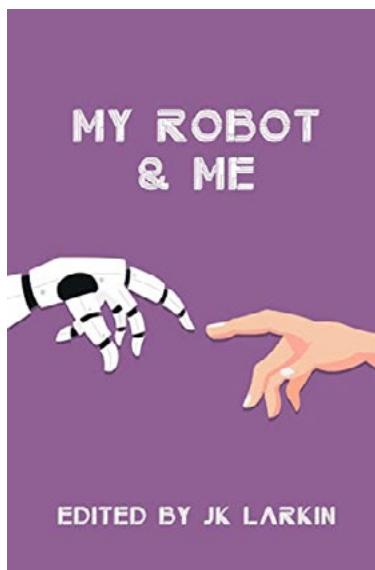
Dänna Wilberg's story "Go Big Or Go Home" and Joseph S. Walker's story "Crime Scene" were accepted into the anthology **Malice in Dallas: Metroplex Mysteries Volume I**.

Visit Dänna Wilberg at:
DannaWilberg.com

Visit Joseph S. Walker at:
jsw47408.wixsite.com/website

Paula Benson's story was accepted into the **My Robot & Me** anthology.

Visit Paula's website at:
paulagailbenson.com



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Member News

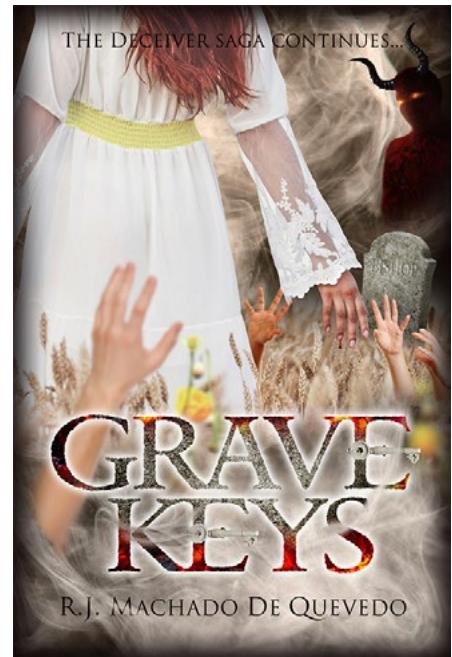
In this supernatural mystery thriller, **GRAVE KEYS**, author R. J. Machado De Quevedo presents the fifth installment of *The Deceiver Saga*.

The Deceiver Saga continues as Melanie Bishop accompanies the FBI to her childhood home in search of proof of her father's heinous crimes. What she uncovers could be the key to locking him away forever. His murders span decades and his legacy intertwined with another, making him the most prolific serial killer ever hunted on US soil. With the help of the FBI, Melanie and her friends seek to put names to the unknown victims and unearth their unmarked graves.

Despite being on the run, Dwayne's evil rampage is far from over. He won't stop until he takes away everyone Melanie loves or turns them against her. Despite the personal cost, Melanie refuses to give up. Her eyes and ears have been opened. She can hear the blood of the innocent crying out from the ground, begging for justice. She can't let them down.

The demonic forces of Hell are frightened. Never before have human ears heard the blood of the innocent. They're desperate to stop Melanie before she can fulfill her supernatural destiny or end the human bloodshed. Their schemes become more reckless and deranged as they fight among themselves to take her down and earn their master's favor. But God is working behind the scenes. Transporting his chosen throughout time to control past outcomes and an important artifact vanishes from history right under Satan's nose.

Published by R. J. Machado De Quevedo, the book is available through bookstores nationwide, from the publisher at TheDeceiverSaga.com or by visiting Amazon.com.



Did you know, *Kings River Life Magazine* has a mystery podcast? Member Anne Da Vigo was featured on the podcast in March and other Capitol Crimes members have been featured. [Click here to visit the podcast.](#)

Also, a few of Capitol Crimes members are listed on the *Kings River Life*'s favorite books of 2021 list. [Check it out here!](#)

—Lorie Lewis Ham, publisher of *Kings River Life Magazine*

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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.

Getting The Most Out Of A Conference

Considering Left Coast Crime, Bouchercon, Thrillerfest or Killer Nashville? Conferences are a significant investment of time and money and filled with opportunity. How can we maximize a return on that investment? Here's my conference prep checklist.

- Know your goals. Why are you going and what do you hope to take away?
- Who do you want to meet? Things get busy on site. Try to schedule time with your targets in advance.
- Pick your panels carefully. Seek topics that help fill your skill gaps. Introduce yourself to the panel before things start. There is always a line afterwards. "I'm Terry Shepherd. Thrilled to hear your presentation and wanted to thank you for doing this for us." Sometimes that will be the extent of your interaction. Read their reaction to see if there is an opportunity for a deeper conversation later.
- Never eat alone. You are in a hive full of fellow practitioners. Schedule companions if you can. When you can't, keep your ears open and look for opportunities to meet new people over a meal.
- Make the most of the cocktail hours. The best ideas and the newest friendships happen at the bar or in the wine-line. If your target is already famous, give them some tempered appreciation. Avoid fan-speak. Ask how the conference is going for them and how their latest book is faring. If they are strangers, the usual, "Tell me about your book," line works like a charm. Follow Dale Carnegie's maxim and make it about them. Your fascination is likely to generate some attention in return.
- Selfies are OK... at the end of a conversation. It can be a fun closer and can build your photo library to use when you are discussing an author on social media.
- Is social media your thing? Post liberally in praise of panelists, people you met and the conference planners. Use appropriate hashtags to get noticed.
- Take a few minutes each night to jot down your takeaways, to-do lists and write thank-you notes. Conferences fill your head with ideas and motivation. Dump them into Evernote while it's fresh and follow up when you return home. If you harvested email addresses, send a short thank-you while the details are still fresh in your memory. The best thank-you notes mention something specific you are thankful for. Wish them well.

Practice these simple habits and you will leave with a larger network of support, actionable ideas and a game plan to leverage your investment to help increase your skill and ultimately your audience.



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Twitter.com/TheTShepherd



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Food For Thought- 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.



IS PASSIVE ALWAYS BAD?

Passive is a dirty word.

In life winners spring to action whereas passive people tend to follow the leader.

Accolades follow adventurers. Mention heroes and legends like Billy the Kid come to mind. A television commercial reminds us that Fortune Favors the Brave.

But while trailblazers catch our eye and hold our attention, there are famous people who have recommended passive resistance. Dr. Martin Luther King and Ghandi are two that come to mind. This makes me wonder if passivity is always bad?

Everyone can think of people and situations that favor involvement over reticence. Candace Lynne Lightner founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving after her daughter was killed by an impaired truck driver in a hit and run. Steve Buscemi, a New York fireman before he turned actor, returned to his old fire unit and worked 12 hour days for several weeks to help clean up rubble after 9/11. In 2011, Kate Winslet re-entered a burning building to rescue Richard Branson's 90 year old mother. I stand in awe.

K-9 handlers train dogs to follow scents and find drugs, often with play rewards. After a success, the dogs are given a favorite toy to chew and shake. But dogs that are becoming part of a bomb detection unit are trained to passively alert. If the dog smells or senses a bomb, they simply sit in front of the target. No noise and no movement on their part equates to less danger for everyone in the vicinity.

In writing we search and destroy inactive words and watch for passive sentence structure. Yet some of the greatest openings ever written include "weasel words". To wit:

"It was love at first sight."

Catch 22, Joseph Heller

"It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen."

Nineteen Eighty-Four, George Orwell

"It was the best of times,

It was the worst of times...."

A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

"He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish."

The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway

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Writers heed the warning show don't tell. But a manuscript cannot rely solely on showing.

Telling functions as a transition between scenes and sequels. It works with economy to ground the reader and move the story forward. "Sunday at two in the afternoon" beats "He squinted at the sun, which had moved 3 feet to the west, and then considered the angle it made in relation to the house. Two in the afternoon, he concluded." The first sentence places us but does not get into unnecessary mechanics.

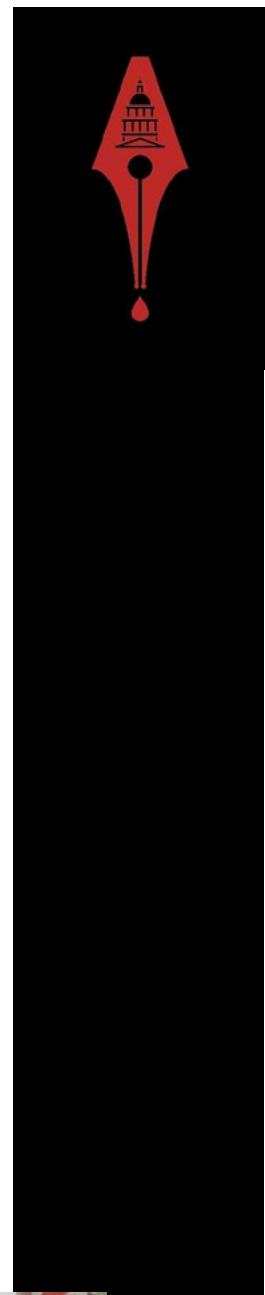
Internal monologues, a form of telling, are a crucial part of romance and mystery novels. In romance, the heroine might wonder why the hero turned and walked away, for example. Are his actions a reflection of his love for her? In mysteries, eager readers need to know the detective's thoughts to give them a fair opportunity to solve the crime.

Telling can describe relevant plot points that don't require a scene. An author may write, "the home owners built a secret room in 1982," but not describe its actual construction because the reader needs to know about the existence of this setting piece without a description of each plank being nailed in place. An interesting side note is that the word built is active, yet the sentence is telling the reader something and not showing it.

Mixing showing and telling augments mood. For example: They walked for five days (telling). The loosely packed dirt trail turned into a dust boil when the Santa Ana wind curled down from the mountains and blew grit into their mouths. (showing)

Exposition or telling sprinkled through a story breaks up the action and moderates its pace.

So it would seem the maxim that active is preferable to passive, in writing and in life, may capture only part of the truth.



Ready, Set, Query

Twitter Pitch Contests

- One day events when writers can pitch their manuscripts on Twitter
- 280 characters per Tweet
- Every space, punctuation mark and hashtag counts as a character
- If an agent gives you a heart, it shows they're interested, and you should query them
- Still need the query package – letter, synopsis, etc.
- Still need to research the agents who liked your Tweet



A huge thank you to our Vice President Jennifer Morita for her January presentation "Querying from A to Q" which was very insightful with lots of tips from her personal experience.



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

Write Your First (or next) Book 2.0 Summit - FREE online event! February 7 - 11, 2022. Over the five days of this summit, 20 speakers will discuss everything from how self-compassion is essential to your writing to creating a roadmap for your manuscript-to finding and managing time so you can actually write your book. [Click here for more information.](#)

Submissions are now being accepted for **Imagine 2200: Climate Fiction for Future Ancestors**, the annual climate fiction contest from Fix, Grist's solutions lab. There is no fee to enter. Submit your short story by May 5, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. PST. [Click here for more details.](#)

The 18th annual **San Francisco Writers Conference** will take place over Presidents Day Weekend – February 17-20, 2022 at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. [Click here for more info.](#)

New York Pitch Conference - professionals are looking for marketable commercial and literary stories and novels. March 10 - 13, 2022 (Zoom Online) March 17 - 20, 2022 (Live in NYC). [Click here for more info.](#)

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

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

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

Romance Writers of America (RWA) - Offers many classes and webinars for all genre writers. [Click on the Events tab for more information.](#) (*Note: You do not need to be a member of RWA, but you must create an account in order to register for a class or event. There is often a fee for the class or event.*)

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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.