

CAPITOL CRIMES

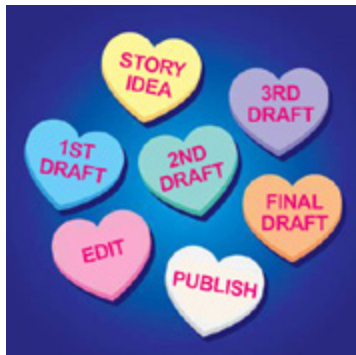
Sharing the thrill of mystery.

FEBRUARY 2024

From the President

Love and Writing

February is home to Valentine’s Day of course, and that got me thinking about all the different kinds of love there are—and specifically, the kind of love it takes to be a writer. It’s not the I-love-chocolate kind of love. That kind is easy. It doesn’t take much effort. Writing is different. Writing is I-love-to-run-marathons kind of love.



You have to really, really love writing in order to sit down and do it. You have to love it enough to sacrifice your hobbies, give up the TV binge-watching, let the household chores slide. You have to love it enough to tie yourself to a laptop or a notepad and not get up until you’ve created something. And then you have to love it all over again and again, until it’s the best revised edition that it can possibly be.

It’s a hard, lonely gig. Especially when most people don’t quite understand. Why would you run 26 miles when you can just get in the car and drive? But when you find others who do get it—from their brimming writerly hearts to their tired, typing fingertips—you’re no longer on your own. And that makes a big difference.

So through Capitol Crimes, let’s share our love of writing on February 14 and throughout the year. Here’s to all of us running a marathon together, one word at a time.

—Claire Booth, President



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2024 Anthology to Showcase Sacramento Agriculture and Restaurants

California is the largest agricultural producer in the nation, and this beautiful, bountiful Sacramento region we call home, lies at the heart of it all. Known as the Farm to Fork Capital of America, even The New York Times recognizes Sacramento as a great restaurant city because of the amazing chefs who use locally-grown, locally-sourced ingredients in their restaurants.

So it seems only fitting that the theme of the 2024 Capitol Crimes Anthology is ***Farm to Foul Play***.

Maybe the gardener selling his bok choy at a farmstand in South Sac decides to off his wife. Or two farmers have a beef over water rights. What if the obnoxious celebrity chef gets tossed off the Tower Bridge right before the gala Farm to Fork Festival dinner? When it comes to murder in Sacramento, the possibilities are endless.

We'll open for submissions in April, and you'll have until the end of May to polish your short story masterpieces. We'll post more details on our [website](#), so keep checking for updates.

For now, here are some guidelines:

1. You must be a Capitol Crimes member in good standing, which means you're a current member of Sisters in Crime AND Capitol Crimes.
2. Your story must address the ***Farm to Foul Play*** theme.
3. Your story must include a crime.
4. AND it has to be set in the Sacramento region, or if you must stray go no further than NorCal.

We can't wait to read your ***Farm to Foul Play*** short stories!

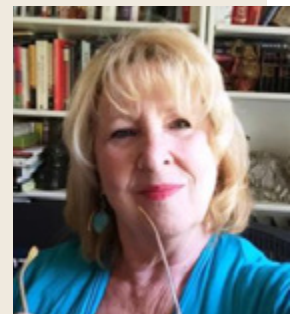
Upcoming Events



MEET THE AUTHOR with BARON BIRTCHER
Tuesday, February 6, 2024 • 7:00 PM (PT) • Zoom

**MEMBERS MEETING –
DEVELOPING THEMES
THROUGH CHARACTER & PLOT**

Saturday, February 17, 2024
1:00 PM (PT) • Zoom



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

Chapter News

MEET THE AUTHOR WITH BARON BIRTCHER

When: Tuesday, February 6, 2024 @ 7 p.m. (PT) • Zoom

Please join us as Penny Manson interviews Capitol Crimes member Baron Birtcher about his latest novel, *Reckoning*. The story follows Ty Dawson, a small-town sheriff with big-city problems, as he struggles to keep modernity at bay in rural Meriwether County. But a standoff between the federal government and cattlemen, a murdered Portland detective, and a swamp of corruption isn't making his life any easier.

Baron is the winner of the Silver Falchion Award (*Hard Latitudes*); Winner of Killer Nashville Readers Choice Award (*South California Purples*); and Best Book of the Year Award for *Fistful Of Rain*. He has also been nominated for the Nero Award, the Lefty, the Foreword Indie, the Claymore, and the Pacific Northwest's Spotted Owl Awards.

Baron's writing has been hailed as "The real deal" by Publishers Weekly; "Fast Paced and Engaging" by Booklist; and "Solid, Fluent and Thrilling" by Kirkus.

Bestselling author, Don Winslow, has said, "You want to read Baron's books, then you want to live in them."

Visit Baron's Facebook page [here](#).

[Register here.](#)



MONTHLY MEETING: DEVELOPING THEME THROUGH CHARACTER AND PLOT

Saturday, February 17, 2024 @ 1 p.m. (PT) • Zoom

A theme is the ultimate message the author needs to get across to the reader. Ultimate, because generally, a work has a very singular message. There are also underlying messages to promote the singular. Author and teacher DJ Adamson will conduct a mini-workshop, discussing the value of considering themes before developing characters and plots. Writers (and readers) will learn how to discover themes, formulate them for their own work, and the value of how strong interlinking themes can create a more memorable story.

DJ's talk will include a PowerPoint presentation and handouts. Attendees are encouraged to apply concepts to their work-in-process during the workshop.

DJ Adamson has received awards for her *Lillian Dove Mystery Series* featuring amateur sleuth Lillian Dove. In addition, she was nominated in 2021 for a Clue Award for her Suspense Crime thriller *Into the Storm*. DJ is the editor of *Le Coeur de l'Artiste*, an online book review magazine, and interviews authors on her website blog, *L'Artiste*. With a marketing background for many years, DJ recently retired from teaching writing and literature at Glendale College. Vist her website djadamson.com

[Register here.](#)

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Member News

From members James L'Etoile and Claire Booth -

On February 24th, Claire Booth and James L'Etoile will present at the Pleasant Pheasant Bookstore in Woodland, CA at 4:00 pm.

From member James L'Etoile -

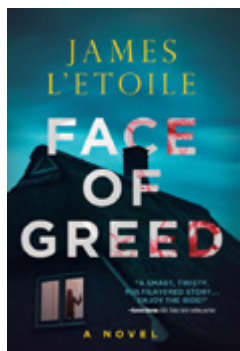
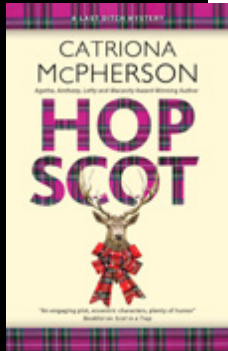
On February 19th, The Alta Mira Women's Club will hold their Annual Authors Day with James L'Etoile, Ann Parker, Camille Minichino, and Simon Wood from 12-2pm at the Alta Mira Historical House, 561 Lafayette Ave, San Leandro, CA 94577.

James L'Etoile will appear in a segment of NBC Radio's "Noir At The Radio Bar" during February as a lead-in to Left Coast Crime Seattle Shakedown.

Congratulations to Capitol Crimes members nominated for a Lefty Award to be presented at Left Coast Crime -

Hop Scot (Last Ditch Motel #6) by Catriona McPherson has been nominated for best humorous mystery.

Dying for a Decoration by Cindy Sample has been nominated for best humorous mystery.



Face of Greed by James L'Etoile has been nominated for best mystery.

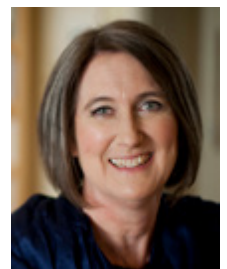
The Bitter Past by Bruce Borgos has been nominated for best historical mystery.



From member Judith Starkston -

Author Event: In-person

Mark your calendars for: "Writing Workshop on Point of View" at the Avid Reader Bookstore in Davis (617 2nd Street) on Wednesday, February 28, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Capitol Crimes member Judith Starkston and Tim Schooley will share their tactics for bringing readers deeply into the POV of their characters, an essential skill for increasing your readers' emotional response to your words by feeling what your characters feel. We will also cover choosing from a variety of POVs, head-hopping, and exercises to stretch your wings. Avid Reader Bookstore asks attendees buy one of either author's books from the store that evening.



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In Other News

Guppy Anthology call for submissions – *Gone Fishin': Crime Takes a Holiday*, the Eighth Guppy Anthology will be released by February 10, 2025. The deadline for submissions will be 11:59 p.m. EST on March 10, 2024. See the January issue of the FIRST DRAFT newsletter for more info. Log in at <https://sincguppies.wildapricot.org/>

San Diego Patners In Crime – Feb 10 @ 2pm PT - “Police Investigations” with Betty Kelepecz who had a distinguished twenty-five year career and received the National Woman Law Enforcement Executive of the Year award. [Register here.](#)

SinC National - Write Ins! – Thanks to a group of intrepid volunteers, SinC will be offering write-ins on Tuesdays, Fridays and two Saturdays. [Click here for schedule.](#)

30th Annual Northern California Publishers & Authors (NCPA) Book Awards Competition. ENTRY DEADLINE: February 15, 2024. You do not have to be a member to enter. For more information visit the NCPA website [here.](#)

Left Coast Crime “The Seattle Shakedown” - April 11-14, 2024 – Bellevue, Washington. Guest of Honor. Megan Abbott. Guest of Honor. Robert Dugoni. Toastmaster. Wanda M. Morris. For more info go to: <https://leftcoastcrime.org/2024/index.html>

Thrillerfest XIX - May 28 - June 1, 2024 - Sheraton Times Square in New York City. Featuring a blockbuster line-up with 2024 ThrillerMasters Tess Gerritsen and Dennis Lehane, 2024 Spotlight Guest Steph Cha, and 2024 Spotlight Guest Ruth Ware. We’re also celebrating our 2024 Silver Bullet Award, Louise Penny, and our 2024 ThrillerFan Ayo Onatade. Join us for Master Class, CraftFest, PitchFest, QueryFest, ThrillerFest, and more. <https://thrillerfest.com/>

Killer Nashville – August 22-25, 2024, Franklin, Tennessee. Killer Nashville is the premier forum for all genres incorporating mystery, thriller, suspense, action, or romance elements; learn, present, meet agents and editors, sign books, mingle with forensic experts, and network. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Bouchercon – August 28 - September 1, 2024 - Nashville, Tennessee. “Murder and Mayhem in Music City.” Guests of Honor: Harlan Coben, Heather Graham, Anthony Horowitz, Mick Herron, V. M. Burns, Brad Thor, Kelli Stanley, Rachel Howzell Hall, J. T. Ellison, and Clay Stafford. [Find out more and to register click here.](#)

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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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