

# CAPITOL CRIMES

*Sharing the thrill of mystery.*

JUNE 2023

## From the President

### The art of revising.

After spending the better part of 18 months rewriting, editing and tinkering with my first manuscript, I could write the book on revising — how *not* to do it.



Fortunately Capitol Crimes is bringing in a real expert this month — author and fellow SinC member from the Palmetto chapter [Carla Damron](#) — to help members polish their first drafts into shiny bestsellers.

Carla is the author of the Caleb Knowles mystery novels, a series featuring a social worker and his deaf brother, and draws from her own experience as a licensed clinical social worker and advocate.

In her new novel, *THE ORCHID TATTOO*, a social worker finds herself drawn into the human trafficking network when her sister vanishes. *THE ORCHID TATTOO* recently won the winter Pencraft Award for Literary Excellence.

She’s also penned numerous short stories, essays and op-ed pieces.

You don’t want to miss our June 17 Members Meeting with Carla, who will chat with us about how to revise your manuscript by offering techniques for moving the story forward, finding where the plot sags and how to use tension in every scene.

Capitol Crimes member [Karen A. Phillips](#), who will be this month’s Meet the Author guest, said beta readers helped her revise her debut mystery *A DEADLY COMBO*.

“I used four beta readers and each of them found something different to comment on. When all four gave me the same sage advice,

*(Continued on next page)*

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you bet I listened. That’s when an author needs to pay attention and address those areas that give the reader pause,” Karen said.

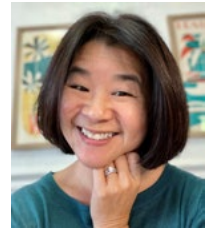
I finished the last round of revisions with my agent last week. As I type this, I’m preparing for a whole new circle of writing hell. But here are a few things I managed to learn:

- Be ruthless. Kill your darlings. (Or just put them in a coma, as someone at the Desert Sleuths [2021 WriteNow! Annual Conference](#) suggested instead.) Then carry on writing. Half my manuscript ended up in my “Unused Bits” file, and some of it made it back in.
- Make friends with Word Lady (or Word Guy) by using the “read aloud” function. I heard mistakes I’d read dozens of times, and awkward phrasing that made me cringe.
- You can tinker with your manuscript forever. Don’t.

My long and winding revision journey also taught me better ways to plot and structure my next manuscript.

So I’m thinking Book 2 will go way smoother. Right?

—Jennifer Morita, President



**NOTE - Capitol Crimes is taking a break in July to enjoy the summer. There will be no newsletter or monthly meeting.**

## Upcoming Events



**MEET THE AUTHOR with KAREN PHILLIPS**  
Tuesday, June 13, 2023 • 7:00 PM (PT) • Zoom

**MEMBERS MEETING with CARLA DAMRON**  
Saturday, June 17, 2023 • 1:00 PM (PT) • Zoom



**TAROT FOR AUTHORS WORKSHOP**  
Saturday, August 19, 2023 • 10 AM - 12 PM (PT)  
South Natomas Library  
2901 Truxel Rd, Sacramento

**CAPITOL CRIMES WRITERS WORKSHOP**  
with YASMIN ANGOE

October 26-29, 2023

Mercy Center Auburn, 535 Sacramento Street, Auburn CA

Visit [www.CapitolCrimes.org](http://www.CapitolCrimes.org) for details and to register.

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# Chapter News

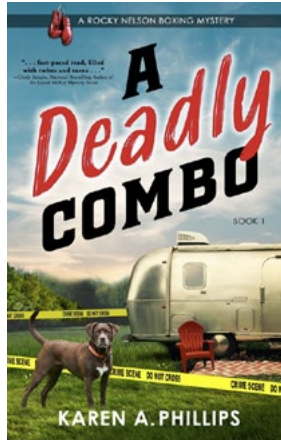
## MEET THE AUTHOR – KAREN A. PHILLIPS with Penny Manson

Join us Tuesday, June 13 at 7 p.m. on Zoom as Karen discusses her debut novel, a cozy-noir murder mystery, *A Deadly Combo*.

In the rural backdrop of the Sierra Foothills, things move at a leisurely pace. But when retired twin sisters find the local trailer restorer dead at a vintage trailerfest, suddenly, life in the foothills is anything but...

“A Deadly Combo” is the first book in the Rocky Nelson Boxing Mystery Series – a perfect series for lovers of small town mysteries with a cozy-noir feel that features boxing and an amateur sleuth who will stop at nothing to save the lives of those she loves.

[Register here.](#)



## LET YOUR STORY BLOOM THROUGH REVISION with Carla Damron

Join us Saturday, June 17 at 1 p.m. on Zoom as Carla discusses how the process of revision is critical to the success of a novel. While creating a story comes from the magic of our imagination, revision requires our rational brain and our critical eye. In revision, we prune away the branches that go nowhere, the weeds that entangle our text, and the dead leaves that hinder growth. Revision is sacrifice and fine-tuning, but it is also the process of freeing the novel: letting it emerge into what it is meant to be.

Carla will offer specific techniques to answer the questions we must ask ourselves as we revise: what moves the story forward? Where does the plot sag? How can we make the narrative the best reading experience it can be? And most important of all: How do we use tension in every scene?

[Register here.](#)

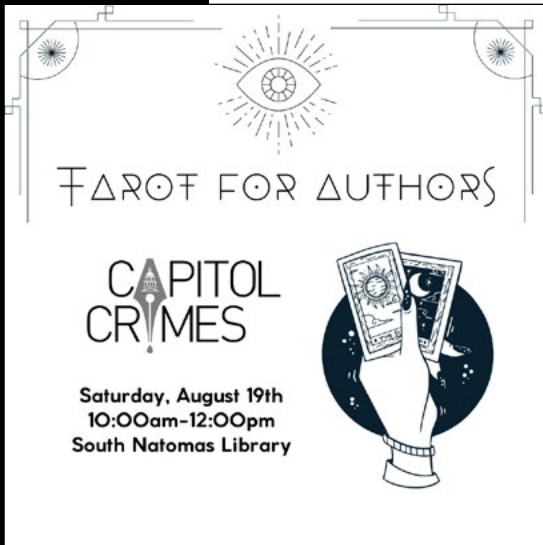


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## Chapter News

**Saturday, June 24, 1 pm** at [Baker Street West \(Hein & Company Bookshop\)](#) 204 N Main St., Jackson, CA 95642. JERI WESTERSON, past vice president and member of Sisters in Crime Los Angeles and past president for the SoCal chapter of Mystery Writers of America, will be in the town of Jackson near Sacramento in a gem of a bookshop, whose entire upper floor is a Sherlockian's Heaven, filled with little Victorian shops, and even a recreation of the Great Man's rooms! Join Jeri there for the launch of the first in her Irregular Detective Mysteries THE ISOLATED SEANCE, where one of Sherlock Holmes' former Baker Street Irregulars, all grown up, opens his own detective agency...with mixed results. Fun presentation, giveaways, and freebies!



### TAROT FOR AUTHORS August 19th, 10:00am-12:00pm

Looking for a new way to inspire creativity in your writing? Whether you're a skeptic or a regular practitioner, have you ever considered using tarot as a writing tool? After hearing about this method from speaker Lisa Kessler, many Capitol Crimes members have become hooked! Join us for an in-person two-hour workshop to explore how this process could work for you. Board Member Jessica Cline will give us a brief introduction to the elements of Tarot, then we will write using a variety of Tarot prompts and discuss the results. If you have a favorite deck (or several) feel free to bring them. If not, we will have decks for you to use. We're looking forward to a fun morning of learning and creativity. The workshop is

free and open to all, so join us and bring a friend! Registration coming soon.

Location: South Natomas Library, 2901 Truxel Rd, Sacramento, CA 95833

### WRITERS RETREAT WITH YASMIN ANGOE • October 26-29, 2023 Mercy Auburn Center, Auburn CA

**SOLD OUT! Wait list spots available.**

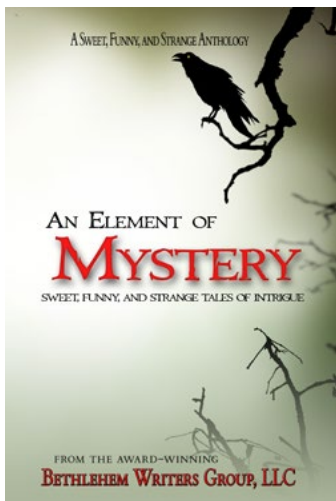
Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! Developmental editor and bestselling author of HER NAME IS KNIGHT and THEY COME AT NIGHT Yasmin Angoe will be visiting from South Carolina to spend three packed days with writers. This is your chance to go in-depth on your pages through group AND individual sessions with Yasmin, as well as spend uninterrupted time writing in a beautiful setting with fellow crime writers.

The Capitol Crimes Writing Retreat is limited to 15 attendees. Participants will receive individual critiques of up to 10 pages from Yasmin, an individual consultation with her, five in-depth craft sessions, and time to write and share with fellow attendees.

Lodging & meals are included at the Mercy Auburn Retreat Center. [Learn more here.](#)

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## Member News



### From Marianne H. Donley -

*An Element of Mystery, Sweet, Funny, and Strange Tales of Intrigue* is a finalist for the 2023 Next Generation Indie Book Awards. Marianne H. Donley has a short mystery in the book and (along with Carol L. Wright) is a co-editor. Besides Marianne's contributions to the anthology, Capitol Crimes members Debra H. Goldstein and Paula Gail Benson have short mystery stories in the book.

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

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



### From James L'Etoile -

- James L'Etoile will be teaching a short story seminar at the Lincoln Public Library to the Youth Summer Writing Program on June 14th at 1:00. Great questions last year as these young writers submitted their story stories for the Library's anthology.

Lincoln Public Library

June 14, 2023 @ 1pm

<https://calendar.lincolnca.gov/library/Detail/2023-06-14-1300-Introduction-to-Short-Story-Writing-with-James-LEt>



### Introduction to Writing Short Stories for Young Writers

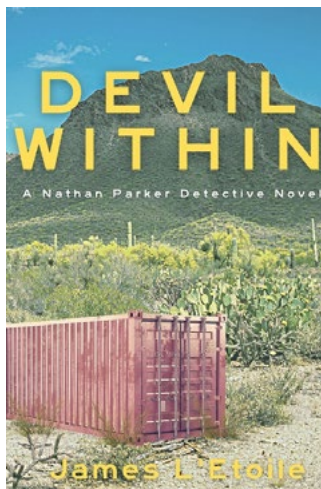
- James L'Etoile is happy to reveal the cover for *Devil Within*, the sequel to the Lefty and Anthony Award nominated *Dead Drop*. The book will be released late July and look forward to event announcements soon.

<https://www.amazon.com/Devil-Within-Detective-Nathan-Parker-ebook/dp/B0C4M6T4J4/>

Facebook: @authorjamesletoile

Twitter: @jamesletoile

Instagram: @authorjamesletoile



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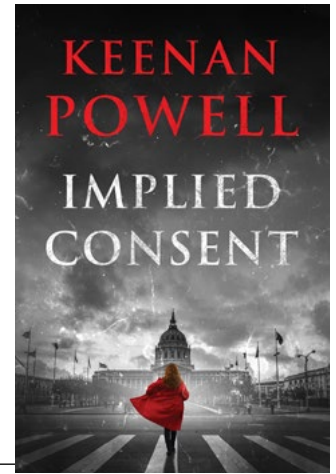
## Member News

### From Keenan Powell –

Keenan Powell's *Implied Consent*, a Maureen Gould Legal Thriller, received a Gold Medal for Best Adult Fiction E-Book at the Ippy Awards.

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

Instagram: [keenan.powell](https://www.instagram.com/keenan.powell)



### From Lorie Lewis Ham–

New Mysteryrat's Maze Podcasts went up in May! One features the prologue and first chapter of "Last Liar Standing" by Danielle Wong <https://mysteryratsmaze.podbean.com/e/last-liar-standing-by-danielle-wong/>

The other one features the mystery short story *The Rabbi's Wife Stayed Home* by Debra H. Goldstein <https://mysteryratsmaze.podbean.com/e/the-rabbi-s-wife-stayed-home-by-debra-h-goldstein/>

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



### From Terry Shepherd –

Shout out to two Capitol Crimes members are featured in the 17th edition of the Malice Domestic Anthology, "Mysteries Most Traditional." As noted last month, James L'Etoile's "The Parlin Fork Letters" is included, as is Eve Elliot's short story, "Hell Hath No Fury."

[malicedomestic.org/anthologies.html](http://malicedomestic.org/anthologies.html)

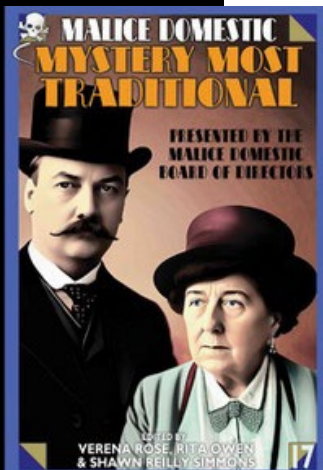
Also, member Joseph S. Walker continues his winning streak with the appearance of "Two Black Bean and Shrimp Quesadillas and a Pink Ruger LCP," in the 8th edition of "The Guns and Tacos" anthology. Both Joe and Eve appear in our Capitol Crimes Anthology, "Cemetery Plots of Northern California."

All three tomes are available at Amazon.

Visit James L'Etoile at [jamesletoile.com](http://jamesletoile.com)

Visit Joeeph S. Walker at [jsw47408.wixsite.com/website](http://jsw47408.wixsite.com/website)

Visit Eve Elliot at [www.eveelliot.com](http://www.eveelliot.com)



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## Member News

### From Richard Meredith –

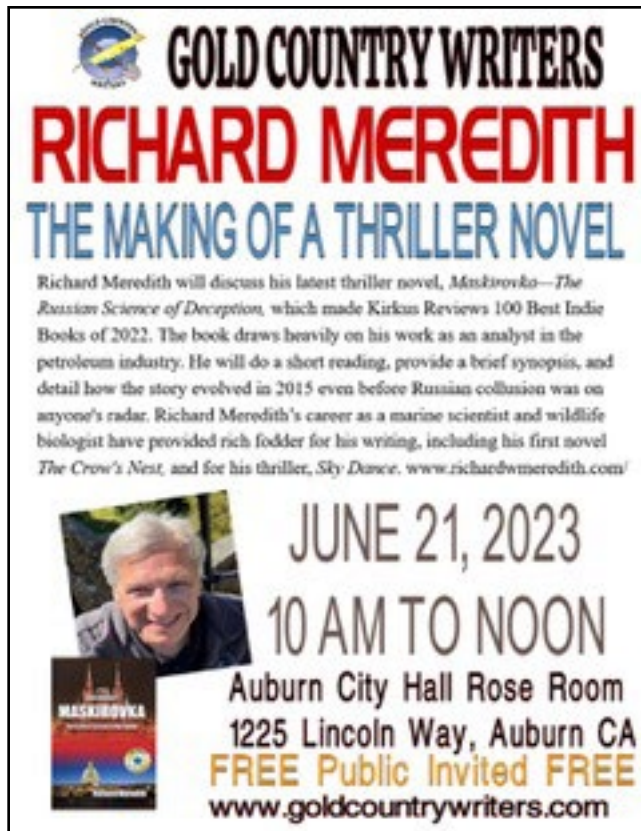
Richard Meredith will be speaking to the Gold Country Writers on The Making of a Thriller Novel and how he's used his professional career as a marine scientist, wildlife biologist, and environmental analyst as inspiration for his three novels: *Sky Dance*, *The Crow's Nest*, and *Maskirovka* – The Russian Science of Deception.

The talk will be held at the Auburn City Hall, Rose Room, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn, California from 10 am to Noon on June 21, 2023. The event is free and the public is cordially invited.

Contact Gold Country Writers at [www.goldcountrywriters.com](http://www.goldcountrywriters.com) if you have any questions.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/richard.meredith.967>

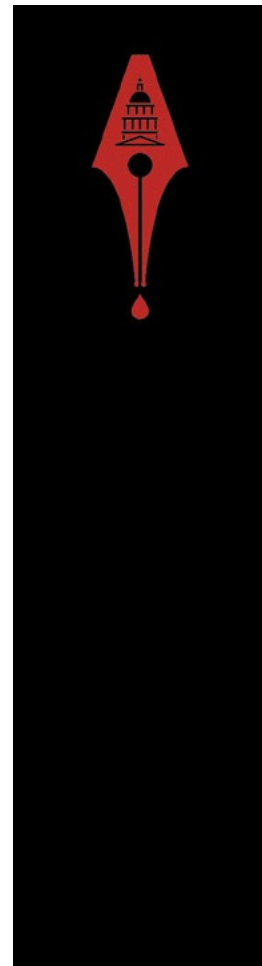
Twitter: @SactoWriterRick / Instagram: Sacto\_WriterRick



**GOLD COUNTRY WRITERS**  
**RICHARD MEREDITH**  
**THE MAKING OF A THRILLER NOVEL**

Richard Meredith will discuss his latest thriller novel, *Maskirovka—The Russian Science of Deception*, which made Kirkus Reviews 100 Best Indie Books of 2022. The book draws heavily on his work as an analyst in the petroleum industry. He will do a short reading, provide a brief synopsis, and detail how the story evolved in 2015 even before Russian collusion was on anyone's radar. Richard Meredith's career as a marine scientist and wildlife biologist have provided rich fodder for his writing, including his first novel *The Crow's Nest*, and for his thriller, *Sky Dance*. [www.richardwmeredith.com/](http://www.richardwmeredith.com/)

**JUNE 21, 2023**  
**10 AM TO NOON**  
Auburn City Hall Rose Room  
1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn CA  
**FREE Public Invited FREE**  
[www.goldcountrywriters.com](http://www.goldcountrywriters.com)



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### From Dänna Wilberg –

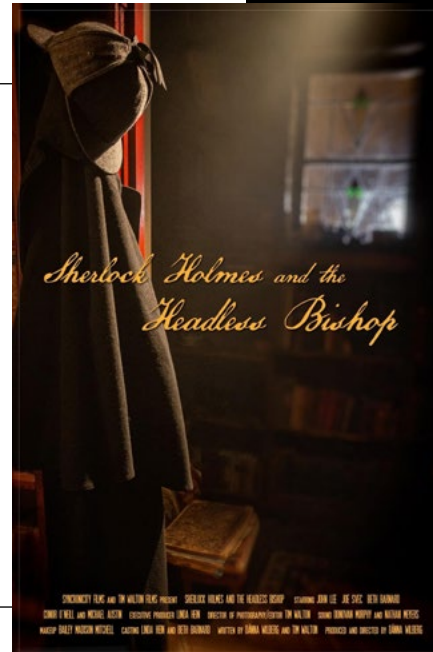
Dänna Wilberg's short film "Sherlock Holmes and the Headless Bishop" will be shown at the Creative Interpretation Film Festival June 13, from 6-10pm - Harris Center - Folsom.

[TICKETS AVAILABLE HERE!](#)

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

Twitter: DannaWilberg@DannaWilberg

Instagram: Instagram: @dannawilbergauthor



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### From Karen A Phillips –

Karen will be one of 40 authors selling books at the Mt Diablo CWC Book Festival June 24, 2023 • 1-3pm in the Tatzin Community Room of the Lafayette Library, 3491 Mount Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, CA 94549.

Visit her website at <https://karenaphillips.com/>

**MARCH**  
**2023**



## In Other News

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

**Grand Canyon Writers** - Saturday, June 10, 2023 - "Write the Story that Keeps Your Butt in the Chair." Our speaker, Valerie Burns (V. M.) Burns, an Agatha, Anthony, Edgar, and Next Generation Indie Award finalist, shares important information for all writers in all genres. [Click here for details.](#)

**Desert Sleuths** - June 21 • "Let's Make a Mystery" • 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. In this interactive session with a panel of mystery authors, you will provide the key details of setting, characters, and weapon as our panel puts it into a mystery. Moderator Debra H. Goldstein will keep things moving swiftly and joins panelists Debra Kuhns, Sharon Lynn and Sarah Smith to provide an evening of fun and challenge. [For details click here.](#)

**SleuthFest 2023** - will be July 6-9, 2023 in sunny south Florida. [Click here for info.](#)

**Coastal Cruisers** - July 15 "Using Tech to Revise your Writing" with "Book doctor" Bobbie Christmas has more than thirty years of experience diagnosing and fixing problems with books. She's developed a system of using your computer to improve your manuscript, which she'll talk about and demonstrate. [To register click here.](#)

**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. The Saturday Evening Keynote is New York Times Bestselling Author Cheryl Strayed. [Click here for more information.](#)

**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.](#)

**Desert Sleuths** - Sept 22-23, 2023 • Write Now! Annual workshop and conference. [Click here for more details.](#)

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### GOT CONTENT?

Send your press-ready article to: [CapitolCrimes@gmail.com](mailto: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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