

January 2010 ...

Volume 18 Number 1

New Year, Great Savings!

Special Sales Day on Friday, January 1, 2010!
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

TGIF! A traditional favorite returns with special deep discounts – don't miss your chance to save! Our Special Sales Coupon New Year's Day Event takes place on **Friday, January 1, from 10 AM to 2 PM** only. Starting on "Black Friday," November 27, customers making an in-store purchase receive a special coupon entitling them to some great discounts and bargains! To receive the coupon, just visit the store between November 27 and New Year's Eve, and make a purchase. Then, on New Year's Day, start things off right by joining us at the store for some special deals! Coupons will *not* be available during the sale, so make sure you come by beforehand to earn one. Coupons are honored for in-store sales only. Also, due to the circumstances of this special day, the staff asks you do *not* turn in receipts for gift certificates during the sale.

Kris Neri

Workshop: "Injecting the paranormal into your writing"
Signing *High Crimes on the Magical Plane*
Thursday, January 7, 7:00 PM

Cross-genre books that combine fantasy elements with other genres continue to sizzle. But there are many pitfalls to avoid on the road to a publishable book. On Thursday, January 7, at 7:00 PM, join Kris Neri, author of *High Crimes on the Magical Plane*, teacher and bookseller. Bestselling author Diana Gabaldon described *High Crimes* as, "...delicious; a funny, pell-mell romp of an adventure rife with psychics, FBI agents and clowns." Kris will share the secrets of combining fantasy with other genres, providing a checklist of considerations to bring to your planning, and noting mistakes you'll want to avoid. She'll also address how fantasy writers can bring more mystery into their writings. Kris is also the author of the Agatha, Anthony and Macavity Award nominated Tracy Eaton mysteries.

John Crowley

Signing *Four Freedoms*
Friday, January 8, 7:00 PM

In the more than three decades he has been writing, John Crowley has received multiple awards for his critically acclaimed works, including *Little, Big, the Egypt Cycle*, and *Lord Byron's Novel: The Evening Land*. *Four Freedoms*, an allegorical World War II novel, includes scenes set in a sort of dream version of San Diego – John will read from these sections. With complex allusions to classical mythology and Shakespearean drama, the American home front during World War II serves as a metaphor for a fallen world seeking renewal. John is a Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at Yale University, teaching fiction writing, screenwriting, and writing in the fantasy and SF genres. MG is thrilled to welcome this noted author on Friday, January 8, at 7:00 PM.

Daniel Suarez

Signing *Freedom*™
Saturday, January 9, 2:00 PM

Daniel Suarez returns on Saturday, January 9, at 2:00 PM to discuss *Freedom*™, the sequel to last year's popular cyberthriller, *Daemon*. Daniel will terrify readers by explaining how the technology depicted in *Daemon* and *Freedom*™ may seem like science fiction, but it actually exists. In a new world controlled by the *Daemon*, an insidious computer program unleashed by a dying game designer, civilization is being remade to the *Daemon*'s plans. But is that any worse than falling victim to the corporate oppressors who oppose the *Daemon*? Daniel's works are informed by his background designing and developing enterprise software for the defense, finance, and entertainment industries, as well as being a gamer and technophile.



Mysterious Galaxy is an independently owned and operated bookstore and a part of the IndieBound Community (indiebound.org)

T. Jefferson Parker and Steve Hamilton

Signing *Iron River* and *The Lock Artist*
Sunday, January 10, 2:00 PM

Spend a suspenseful Sunday afternoon with T. Jefferson Parker and Steve Hamilton at 2:00 on January 10. Los Angeles sheriff's deputy Charlie Hood returns in Jeff's *Iron River*. The *Iron River* of the title is the flow of illegal guns across the border tied to drug cartels, one of the pressing issues affecting the lives of everyone living near the U.S. – Mexican border. Charlie joins the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms task force Operation Blowdown and is caught in the consequences of a stakeout gone wrong. (See Suzanne's review on the back page.)

Like Jeff, Steve writes both an acclaimed series – the Alex McKnight mysteries – and standalone thrillers, including *Night Work* and *The Lock Artist*. The title character, Michael, survived something horrible when he was a child. Now in his late teens, he has two talents – drawing and safecracking / lockpicking. The first may help him get the girl of his dreams ... if the latter doesn't get him in trouble with the law or killed, once the wrong people discover it. (See Terry's review on the back page.) Both Jeff and Steve have a fine collection of awards to their names, including the prestigious Edgar Award, as well as being regional favorites.

John Lescroart

Signing *Treasure Hunt*
Friday, January 15, 7:00 PM

On Friday, January 15, at 7:00 PM, Mysterious Galaxy presents Johnny Capo of Johnny Capo and His Real Good Band! More correctly, we are pleased to welcome the former Johnny Capo, now best-selling thriller author John Lescroart, discussing his latest, *Treasure Hunt*. PI Wyatt Hunt and his young assistant, Mickey Dade, are not doing much business in the beginning of the third Hunt Club novel. When they get involved in an investigation of the murder of Dominic Como, one of San Francisco's most prominent charitable activists, they discover that murder, like charity, may begin at home. John may offer a teaser about *Carnage*, his forthcoming legal thriller.

Carrie Vaughn

Signing *Kitty's House of Horrors*
Saturday, January 16, 2:00 PM

Carrie Vaughn's web site identifies her as "Author. SF geek. Werewolf psychologist," which we find apt for the creator of the Kitty Norville, werewolf talk radio host series, a favorite among the MG staff. Kitty, host of *The Midnight Hour* program in Denver, is invited to take part in a reality television show about the supernatural. Her initial reluctance is just starting to wear off, as things seem to be going well and the show may be educating the public about things that go bump in the night, when the contestants discover it's a trap. Carrie's first young adult novel, *Voices of Dragons*, will be out in March, with a tale of rock climbing, jet fighters, and girl meets dragon. Tune in to Carrie on Saturday, January 16, at 2:00 PM.

Charlie Huston

Signing *Sleepless*
Saturday, January 23, 2:00 PM

Publishers Weekly describes Charlie Huston's new novel, *Sleepless*, as an "impressive, challenging thriller set in postapocalyptic Los Angeles." It's the summer of 2010, and a plague of sleeplessness has struck; most people either are retreating from their wakefulness into an addictive on-line video game, or by taking Dreamer, an illegal drug that is the only temporary relief. An LAPD undercover officer is desperately seeking a solution before the situation consumes his family and himself. In addition to acclaimed stand-alone thrillers like *The Mystic Arts of Erasing All Signs of Death* and *The Shotgun Rule*, Charlie is the imagination behind the recently-concluded Joe Pitt vampire *noir* series. Charlie has also written a number of stories for Marvel Comics. Whichever stories you are passionate about, join us when Charlie visits on Saturday, January 23, at 2:00 PM.

Events continue on the back page

Bob Morris

Signing *Baja Florida*
Tuesday, January 26, 7:00 PM

Former Miami Dolphins quarterback and wrongly accused convict turned occasional sleuth Zack Chasteen is back in a case of fancy yachts, fast-living scoundrels, and pirates in the Bahamas. Assisted by his trusted mystical Taino Indian friend Boggy, and spurred by recent parenthood with by his magazine mogul wife Barbara, Zack agrees to find a dying old friend's estranged daughter in *Baja Florida*. Terry is a huge fan of this action-packed, comical mystery series and encourages fans of Robert B. Parker or Carl Hiaasen who have not tried this series to join her and meet Bob on Tuesday, January 26, at 7:00 PM.

Carol Berg

Signing *The Spirit Lens*
Saturday, January 30, 2:00 PM

On Saturday, January 30, at 2:00 PM, readers are invited to join former mathematics major and computer software engineer Carol Berg at MG. The multiple award-winning mythic fantasy author describes her new novel, *The Spirit Lens*, as a "double-agent murder mystery set in a renaissance-style world where science is marginalizing magic." Failed magician and scholar Portier de Savin-Duplais tends the library of his kingdom's last Collegia Magica, until the king request he look into a murder with disturbing magical overtones, in this first in a new trilogy. Whether you're familiar with Carol's other books, like *The Lighthouse Duet* *Flesh and Spirit* / *Blood and Bone*, or a fantasy reader looking for a new author, we hope you'll join us.

Connie Willis

Signing *Blackout*
Wednesday, February 3, 7:00 PM

Connie Willis has a new book, and she will be discussing and signing *Blackout* at MG on Wednesday, February 3, at 7:00 PM. In her first new novel in seven years, Connie delves into time travel, war, and the actions of individuals that shape history. It's a working chaos as usual, and time-traveling historians are leaving the Oxford of 2060 for a variety of significant times and events, when suddenly, assignments are canceled. It appears that the reliable mechanisms of time travel may be suffering difficulties, and that the belief that historians cannot alter the past may be wrong. A companion novel *All Clear* will follow in Fall 2010. Numbers for the signing line for the Nebula and Hugo award-winning author are available with purchase of *Blackout* from **Mysterious Galaxy**, on sale Tuesday, February 2.



Looking Ahead:

We already have a smashing line up for the beginning of 2010

Here's a sneak preview: One Book, One San Diego reads *Outcasts United*; Jeffrey Siger – February 9; Lisa McMann – February 11; Becca Fitzpatrick – February 11; Kelli Stanley – February 12; Southern CA Writers Conference – February 13 – 15; Dana Stabenow – February 17; Melinda Wells – February 20; ConDor with GOH C.J. Cherryh – February 26 – 28; Joanne Fluke – February 27; Killer Party – March 11; The Tucson Festival of Books – March 13 & 14... and that's just the beginning of wonderful author visits and conferences!

January Signed First Mystery Pick

The Bricklayer by Noah Boyd

Fans of FBI thrillers have a new protagonist / team to cheer for. Steve Vail was an FBI agent who took a semi-involuntary early retirement after being caught in an untenable situation. Now he's a self-employed bricklayer, finding satisfaction in a job well done where he's his own boss. But when the FBI is targeted by extortionists, making the investigators the victims, and it appears that there's a leak inside the organization, Vail is brought out of retirement to provide his expertise in an under-the-radar, mostly off-the-books capacity. The apparent insider knowledge of operations makes the Rubaco Pentad a wily intelligent opponent, and it's to Boyd's credit that while Vail's sometimes "cowboy" methodology is important to the solution, it's not at the expense of the other FBI agents, including his main contact, deputy assistant director Kate Bannon. Vail is a loner, but not a borderline sociopath, like some of his contemporaries. A fast-paced and engaging start to a new series – recommended to fans of Lee Child, P.J. Tracy, or John Sandford. Morrow, \$24.99.

– MeH & sd

Rave Reviews

Iron River by T. Jefferson Parker

Charlie Hood is back for the third installment of T. Jefferson Parker's popular series and he is fighting the good fight on the California / Mexico border. *Iron River* takes place in the badlands divided by an iron river wash in smuggled arms. Hood is a member of the task force Operation Blowdown, targeting local arms manufacturers smuggling American guns and ammunition to Mexican drug cartels. Although Hood is our hero, there are a lot of characters to keep track of in the intricate plotting and fast pacing of *Iron River*. Character development can be difficult when the characters are so enigmatic. Parker solves this challenge, however, with my favorite part of the novel, poignant epistolary asides Hood writes to his parents. The terse, immediate style keeps the action moving back and forth across the border, in and out of bars, hospital rooms and gun stores. Parker is a master of this territory, his description of this landscape is as accurate, yet as *noir*, as the Southwestern desert can be. Although *Iron River* is fiction, its relevance is that the violence from the drug cartels is a constant in our daily suburban life – and that may be the most terrifying part of Parker's story. Dutton, \$26.95. – sd

The Lock Artist by Steve Hamilton

I loved this story, told by a damaged kid/adult named Michael who hasn't spoken a word in 10 years. At eight years old he is orphaned and sent to live with his Uncle Lito in Michigan. He never fits in – not in his community, not in school, and certainly not at home with his bachelor uncle who owns and operates a liquor store behind which the two of them also live. He does discover that he has two talents. He loves to open locks and he is a skilled artist. Both of these talents begin to open doors for him when he is 17 ... some welcome and some ... not so much. But both skills will define his life and his future. The story of the Lock Artist is simultaneously told by Michael as a 17-year-old, an 18-year-old, and as a 28-year-old. It is a clever way to tell his story and I loved the multiple view points from a single character. Minotaur, \$24.99. – tlg

The First Rule by Robert Crais

In Joe Pike, Robert Crais has created a complex, compelling character, a man with deadly skills who lives by a code developed through the crucible of war, a character who in the hands of a lesser writer would reflect a flat stereotype of the silent, menacing killer found in B-grade action films and ready-for-the-trashcan novels. Crais avoids that hazard by investing Pike with depth, intelligence and a fullness of character that makes him both believable and, while still scary, approachable. In *The First Rule*, Crais's latest exploration of Southern California's darker recesses, we learn more about Elvis Cole's often undemonstrative partner in a story of ruthless people and the effects of ambition disconnected from morality. It is also a story of the effects that violence has on even those who would aspire to a moral life. Joe Pike is a man capable of the kind of violence that most of us would rather not contemplate, but he is also a deeply moral character, one whose view of justice is not limited to a list of statutes or the pages of law books. I like this flawed but deeply human character, and I value the lucid storytelling that Crais brings to his novels. It takes tremendous skill to create the appearance of effortlessness that his writing evinces. The highest praise I can give a novel is that I couldn't put it down, that I read it in a single sitting. That was the case with *The First Rule*. Highly recommended. Signed copies available in late January. Putnam, \$26.95.

– Guest Reviewer Terry Hertzler

Spider's Bite by Jennifer Estep

This new series by Estep immediately drew me into a world of elemental assassins, vampires, magic, giants, dwarves, and loads of villains. Most elementals are able to create and harness one of the four major elements – ice, stone, air, and fire – and some minor elements like metal, water, and electricity and you will meet lots of them in this universe. The star of this series is Gin Blanco, *the Spider*, a paid assassin and a stone and ice elemental. She doesn't use her magic much in her job because she doesn't usually need it to complete her assignments, a matter of great pride for her. She was trained by Fletcher Lane, the owner of the Pork Pit, and the man who took her in off the streets when she was 13 after her family was brutally murdered. Gin is a great character with an extensive back story, and more to be revealed in future installments, I am sure. This series starter takes off with an assignment gone bad and Gin in the middle of a very complicated set up and determined to avenge the murder of her mentor. Pocket Books pbo this February, \$7.99. – tlg

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7051 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. #302
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92111
(858) 268-4747