

**FINGERPRINT EXPERT  
LARRY ROSSON  
TO SPEAK AT JANUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>  
BLOODY THURSDAY  
MEETING**

Larry Rosson was originally scheduled to be our May speaker, but author/lecturer Jessica Morrell was injured in an automobile crash in November and is due for surgery in January. Larry was kind enough to trade dates. We look forward to hearing Jessica on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

Larry Rosson established his fingerprinting business in 1988 after a 26-year career with the Portland Police Bureau. While serving with the Portland Police Bureau, he worked as a uniformed police officer in several precincts, including as a SWAT Team Member. He developed and was active in several crime prevention programs. In 1979, he was named Police Officer of the Year and was selected as one of the top police officers in the United States by Parade Magazine. Larry was promoted to Criminalist Crime Scene Investigator in 1980. In this position, his duties included latent print retrieval, crime scene investigations, physical evidence processing, and court presentations of evidence as an expert witness.

Larry's firm, Fingerprinting Services & Investigations, does fingerprinting for business applications and background checks for the general public. He also performs forensic

fingerprinting services and photography, blood spatter interpretations and crime scene drawings. He is qualified as an expert witness in latent fingerprints.

Larry will discuss his work and some of his more interesting cases. He plans to provide handouts about fingerprinting to those who attend the presentation.

We hope you will attend what promises to be a fascinating event. The meeting will be held in the Good Samaritan Medical Center auditorium, 1040 NW 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, (corner of NW 22<sup>nd</sup> and Marshall.) The event will begin with a reception at 7:00 pm, followed by the program at 7:30 pm. The meeting is free and open to the public. Free parking is available in the parking structure adjacent to the auditorium. The Portland Streetcar and Tri-Met run on nearby routes.

## **KATE WILHELM UPDATE**

Kate Wilhelm sent Friends of Mystery greetings to let us know how she is mending after her fall. She says she is impatient, and while her doctors are satisfied with her recovery, she is not. She looks forward to coming to a future meeting to accept her Spotted Owl award.

# THE CHANGING FACE OF MYSTERY

By Bill Cameron

In November I had the opportunity to sit on a panel at Portland's Wordstock Festival with Phillip Margolin and Robert Clark, our topic: "The Changing Face of Mystery." Phil Margolin is well-known to the Friends of Mystery, both as friend and best-selling author of such legal thrillers as *Executive Privilege* and *Gone, But Not Forgotten*, among many others. Robert Clark won the 1999 Edgar Award for *Mr. White's Confession*, and has written critically-acclaimed fiction and non-fiction alike. My own credentials are more modest, with my second mystery, *Chasing Smoke*, just out from Bleak House Books. I debuted in 2007 with *Lost Dog*, for which I was thrilled to be a Spotted Owl finalist.

It's not possible to discuss a topic so broad as the Changing Face of Mystery without addressing the changing face of publishing itself. It's no secret reading is on a decline as book sales face growing competition from other media. Expanding cable television and video offerings, free internet content, and even video games satisfy much of the demand once met almost exclusively by books. Publishing has responded in a number of ways, some more or less effective.

One notable change is greater categorization of fiction in the marketplace. At the panel, Margolin spoke of the challenges he faced as a

new "mystery" writer in the 80's; major success didn't come for him until his books were marketed as legal thrillers, a form popularized by Scott Turow and John Grisham. The drive toward increasingly specific classification continues, resulting in a plethora of genres and sub-genres.

Crime fiction was once limited to such general categories as "traditional," "hard-boiled," "police procedural," and a few others. We now see such finely sliced sub-genres as "historical thriller," "international thriller," "soft-", "medium-" and "hard-boiled," "urban fantasy," "noir," "cozy," "cozy noir" and many more. A visit to a specialty mystery bookstore like Murder by the Book here in Portland provides a primer in the great variety now recognized. Want a book about a vampire detective? What about a knitting cozy, or a political thriller set in former Soviet-bloc Europe? You'll find each in a specific category. Sub-genre expansion can provide an easy means for readers to find just what they're looking for.

Robert Clark's fiction falls into a broader category – literary – and controversy surrounded his 1999 Edgar win. He'd not thought of his book as a mystery himself, and a number of readers agreed. In my view, his experience shines a light on the downside of categorization. Was *Mr. White's Confession* a mystery? I'd argue yes, but not exclusively. It found readers among a number of audiences, both winning the Edgar and also named one of the London *Times Literary Supplement's* Best Books of 1999 in addition to its critical success.

My own entry into the world of mystery was made possible by a recent development: the resurgence of the small press after a long period of big publisher consolidation. A wide range of new mystery and suspense is now available from such small publishers as Busted Flush, Hard Case Crime, Bleak House, Akashic, and more. Small presses are often labors of love first, offering quality books that might have a more difficult time finding a home in a large publisher's catalog. Though the print runs are small, the critical success and reader response have been huge for many of these publishers.

Meanwhile, the big players like St. Martin's, Kensington, Random House and others continue to publish a wide range of mystery and suspense. The publishing industry may face great challenges, but more and higher quality crime fiction is available than ever before. As a reader, I'm an omnivore, moving from international spy thriller to light-hearted cozy to gritty noir and loving them all. More books in more categories with broader crossover appeal for many titles means, I believe, lots of great books for all of us.

## UPCOMING MYSTERY CONVENTIONS

Attending a mystery convention adds whole new dimensions to the enjoyment of our favorite reading activity. You can often meet some of

your favorite authors and discover new favorites, hear panels discuss new and different aspects of crime fiction, and learn about the "real world" of investigation. Each time, you come back with great stories to share with friends. If time and your budget allow, the following is a partial list of the major conventions for 2009.

**LEFT COAST CRIME** – March 7-12, 2009  
Waikoloa Beach Resort, The Big Island,  
Hawaii - [www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009](http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009)

**MALICE DOMESTIC XXI** – May 1-3, 2009  
Arlington, Virginia –  
[www.malicedomestic.org](http://www.malicedomestic.org)

**BOUCHERCON 2009** – October 14-18<sup>th</sup>  
Indianapolis, Indiana – Guest of Honor:  
Michael Connelly.  
[www.bouchercon2009.com](http://www.bouchercon2009.com)

## TWO MYSTERY "GREATS" LEAVE US IN 2008

**TONY HILLERMAN**  
**May 27, 1925 – October 26, 2008**

Well-known mystery writer Tony Hillerman died at the age of 83 from a pulmonary embolism. Hillerman's novels were set in the Navajo country of the Southwest. They featured Lieut. Joe Leaphorn and Sgt. Jim Chee, beginning with *The Blessing Way* in 1970, and continuing for 17 more novels.

Hillerman was the winner of a Best Mystery Novel Edgar for *Dance Hall of the Dead* in 1974 and was presented with the Mystery Writers of America Grand Master Award in 1991. He was an early guest conference speaker for FOM.

**DONALD WESTLAKE**  
**July 23, 1933 – December 31, 2008**

Prolific mystery writer Donald Westlake died at the age of 75 from a heart attack. He was the author of more than 100 books and 5 screenplays. He also wrote under the pseudonyms of Richard Stark, Tucker Coe, Samuel Holt, and Edwin West.

Most of Westlake's books were set in New York City, and he typed all his manuscripts on a manual typewriter.

Westlake received an Academy Award nomination for his screenplay, "*The Grifters*." He was also the winner of three Edgar awards: Best Motion Picture (1991) – "*The Grifters*"; Best Short Story (1990) – "*Too Many Crooks*"; and Best Novel (1968) – "*God Save the Mark*." He received the Grand Master Award from the Mystery Writers of America in 1993.