

**AUTHOR/LECTURER
JESSICA MORRELL TO
SPEAK AT THE MAY 28
BLOODY THURSDAY
MEETING**

Well-known author and lecturer Jessica Morrell will speak at our upcoming Bloody Thursday meeting on May 28. In addition to teaching at Portland Community College, Mt. Hood Community College and Evergreen State College, Jessica has conducted many writing workshops throughout the country and in Canada and Mexico. She is a frequent presenter at the Willamette Writers Conferences. Jessica is also the author of several books. Her most recent book, *Bullies, Bastards, & Bitches: How to Write the Bad Guys of Fiction*, was published last July by Writer's Digest. Her other books include *Between the Lines*, *The Writer's I Ching*, and *Writing Out the Storm*. Her presentation will also include handouts for those attending.

We hope you will attend this much-anticipated event. The meeting will be held in the Good Samaritan Medical Center auditorium, 1040 NW 22nd Avenue (corner of NW 22nd 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.

2009

SPOTTED

OWL

WINNER

NAMED

Executive Privilege by Phil Margolin was selected as the winner of the 2009 Spotted Owl award. The committee was unanimous in their praise for the legal thriller. Set in Washington, D.C. and Oregon, a private investigator discovers evidence that points to the President as a possible serial killer. Phil has been a Friends of Mystery supporter since the beginning of the organization. *Executive Privilege* is his 13th mystery novel, and his next is *Fugitive*, to be published in June 2009.

The other finalists are:

2. *Chasing Smoke*, by Bill Cameron
3. *House Rules*, by Mike Lawson

4. *Nameless Night*, by G.M. Ford
 5. *Cold Plague*, by Daniel Kalla
 6. *Skeleton Lake*, by Mike Doogan
 7. *Shanghai Tunnel*, by Sharan Newman
 8. *Frozen Sun*, by Stan Jones
 9. *Fixation: A Thriller*, by Mark Schorr
 10. *Careless in Red*, by Elizabeth George
- Tie *Blue Smoke and Murder*, by Elizabeth Lowell

The Spotted Owl committee members are Marilyn Katz, Marlyne Stucky, Jeannette Voss, Carrie Richards, and Pete Scott. They evaluated 72 books. The 2009 award marks the 14th year of Spotted Owl winners. Previous winners were Kate Wilhelm, Kris (Nelscott) Rusch, and Lowen Clausen, who have each won the award twice. Other winners include Earl Emerson, John Straley, Tom Mitcheltree, L.L. Thrasher, Marcia Simpson, G.M. Ford, Kevin O'Brien, and Mike Doogan.

BOOK SALE TO PRECEDE MAY 28 MEETING

The annual Friends of Mystery book sale will precede our Bloody Thursday meeting on May 28. Most paperback books will be 25 cents, and most hardbacks will be 50 cents. We have had a donation of some signed first editions that will be priced at two to five dollars. The sale will be from 6:45 to 7:30 pm. Proceeds will support Friends of Mystery activities.

FRIENDS OF MYSTERY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Our Executive Committee members have been working hard to bring you interesting programs, newsletters and an exciting and informative web page. As the "volunteer president", I am so very thankful for the support of all the members of the Executive Committee who have volunteered their time and talents to the ongoing activities of Friends of Mystery this past year.

Jeannette Voss – Editor of the Blood Letter
 Carrie Richards – Treasurer
 Nancy Thomas – Membership Chair
 John Walsdorf – Chair of Special Events
 Bill Cameron – Web Master & Publicity
 Carolyn Lane – Publicity
 Maggie Stuckey – FOM Reading Group
 Jay Margulies – Ex-Officio and Advisor
 Stan Johnson – Ex-Officio and Advisor
 Members of the Spotted Owl Committee – Marilyn Katz, MarlyneStucky, Jeannette Voss, Carrie Richards, Pete Scott

Elinore Rogers,
 President and Chair of the Spotted Owl Committee

Submissions Welcomed

Have you discovered a new author?
 Read a great mystery lately? Want to comment on trends in mystery writing?
 Who is your favorite classical mystery

writer? Who would you like to hear at one of our Bloody Thursday meetings? Our members and our editor welcome your ideas and comments on all things mysterious. You can send them to our PO Box 8251, Portland, OR 97207, or by email to info@friendsofmystery.org

MURDER IN TRANSLATION (Part Two) by HARRIET STAY

In part one I introduced you to some of my favorite Scandinavian mystery writers and their works: Arnaldur Indridason, Asa Larsson, and Stieg Larsson. Continuing on...

You may have heard of **Henning Mankell** and his Swedish Detective Chief Inspector Kurt Wallender procedurals. My first Mankell, *The White Lioness*, mixes procedural, thriller, and a historically political palate set in 1992, at the time Nelson Mandela is released from Robben Island. But this is fiction, a what-if; it was difficult believing this was wholly Mankell's imagination. It felt so real.

In *Sidetracked*, for which Mankell was awarded the CWA Gold Dagger, DCI Wallender has a serial killer on his turf. A bit of cat and mouse ensues. *Faceless Killers* actually precedes the two just noted and delves into the horrific murder of a farm couple where there appears to be no motive. *The Man Who Smiled* begins while DCI Wallender is on leave after shooting a suspect. He receives a plea for help from a friend, but ignores him for personal reasons – until his friend is found murdered. Next in

line for me is *Firewall*. Then I will go in search for more. Henning Mankell's writing is masterful and finely detailed. And, I understand the BBC has produced some for the telly.

Hakan Nesser is another Swedish crime writer I discovered and as you can see from my collection so far, obviously enjoy. I have *Mind's Eye*, *Borkmann's Point*, *The Return*, and *Woman with Birthmark*. I didn't read them in order but rather as I discovered them, but I must tell you *Mind's Eye* received the Best First Novel prize from the Swedish Crime Writers' Academy. *Borkmann's Point* received the Best Novel Award. Actually, all were winners on my list. *Mind's Eye* was especially innovative: the murderer – or so it's believed – calls the police to report finding his wife dead in the bathtub. The problem for him and DCI Van Veteren is he doesn't remember killing her, and it is definitely a murder. They had only been married for three months.

The latest and the only one I've read so far in the **Jo Nesbo** series featuring Detective Inspector Harry Hole is *Nemesis*. It all begins with watching a bank robbery, moment by moment. A smashing start. Nesbo's writing is sparse, effective, and propelling. As in most police agencies, multiple crimes are occurring. In this, the wow factor is they eventually tie together to my complete delight. His stories are set in Oslo, Norway. His other titles are *The Redbreast*, *Devil's Star*, and coming out this year is *The Redeemer*. Not all are yet published in the U.S. Lucky for us we can still order books from across the pond.

Last year's winner of Sweden's Best First Crime Novel Award was *Echoes From the Dead* by **Johan Theorin**. This journalist and scriptwriter has spent all of his summers on Oland, a small island off the coast of Sweden and the setting for his debut story of suspense. It begins with a small boy

wandering off on his own adventure never to be heard from again. More than twenty years have passed as the story picks up. The character I most enjoyed was the grandfather, Gelof. He and his cronies are determined to play detectives. But two stories are told side by side; the other is quite dark and begins in 1936 with another young boy aged ten. The stories explore the motives of crime and how violent acts affect people in isolated communities. Johan Theorin's second crime novel, *Night Blizzard*, will be published in the U.S. this year.

Watch for part three in your next issue of The Blood Letter.

Things Mysterious...

The Akashic Noir Series has just added Portland and Seattle to the list of "Noir" cities. Beginning in 2004 with the publication of *Brooklyn Noir*, this anthology series contains all original stories featuring distinct neighborhoods within the city of the book. Member Bill Cameron has one of the stories in the *Portland Noir* book. Look for it at your local bookstore.

The 40th annual Willamette Writers Conference will be held August 7-9, 2009 at the Sheraton Airport Hotel in Portland. There will be pre-conference activities on Thursday, August 6 from 5 to 9 pm. At the Saturday awards banquet, Irene Radford will receive a Lifetime Achievement award and Phil Margolin will receive the Distinguished NW Writer award. For more information, contact them by email at WILWRITE@WILLAMETTEWRITERS.COM or call 503-452-1592.