

## *Celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Issue of “The Blood- Letter”*

As we celebrate this 100<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Blood-Letter*, we are also celebrating the formation of Friends of Mystery, 30 years ago. At that time, a group of mystery fiction writers and fans organized a series of conferences, with authors and critics speaking about mysteries in fact and fiction. After four annual conferences, the group was formalized as a non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization, and the lecture series was started.

In the first newsletter, published in September 1986, a contest was announced to “Name This Newsletter”. The winner was Linda Clark, who suggested *The Blood-Letter*. Linda would later become president of Friends of Mystery. The first *Blood-Letter* was published in September 1987. Over the years *The Blood-Letter* published many reviews of mystery fiction, interviews with authors, and highlights of coming Bloody Thursday lecture guests. Many nationally known authors have appeared at our lecture series, including Sara Paretsky, Robert Campbell, Steven Greenleaf, Jonathan Gash, J.A. Jance, and Steven Saylor. Other programs featured speakers whose professions are associated with crime and detection.

Among these speakers were Dr. Karen Gunson from the state medical examiner’s office; Dr. John Shilke, who spoke about poisons; Dr. Frank Colistro, a forensic psychologist; Larry Rossen, a fingerprint and blood-spatter expert; and cold case Portland Police Detective James Lawrence.

In 1995, Friends of Mystery announced in *The Blood-Letter* an award to be given annually for the best mystery novel written by a Pacific Northwest author. This award was named The Spotted Owl Award. A committee of judges was formed, consisting of author Ed Goldberg, bookstore owner Carolyn Lane, and FOM co-founder Stan Johnson. The first winner was Earl Emerson for his novel, *The Vanishing Smile*. The Spotted Owl award continues to be presented annually and is a nationally recognized honor. *The Blood-Letter* is published five times each year, and hundreds of copies are distributed to current members, media, libraries, bookstores, and organizations. Many other readers find us online at our website, [www.friendsofmystery.org](http://www.friendsofmystery.org). A two-volume bound set of the issues is housed in the Multnomah County Library – Central Branch.

**The November meeting is  
Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup>.  
Please join us.**

# **Oregon State Police Forensic Scientist Dr. Nici Vance**

The November Bloody Thursday speaker will be Dr. Nici Vance, a forensic scientist who has been with Oregon State Police Lab for more than 12 years. She works as a crime scene analyst and analyzes physical evidence from violent and high-profile cases from all around the state. Dr. Vance also conducts continuing education courses for lawyers. She recently held classes on how to tell the difference between human and non-human remains for search and rescue members in Southern Oregon. Dr. Vance works as a liaison between the lab and the State Medical Examiner's Office as a forensic anthropologist. She has recently been featured in the media for her work to identify the remains of a victim killed about eight years ago by a train in Tigard. The body of the man, believed to be a transient, has been in the morgue since then. Dr. Vance has reopened the cold case, hoping to bring closure to the case and the victim's family.

Please join us for this fascinating look into the workings of forensic science with this noted expert. The meeting will be held at our new location – Terwilliger Plaza – in their Conference Room, located on the P3 level. 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 lots just east across 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the

lower level entrance. Handicapped parking is available at the upper level entrance. Tri-Met bus #8, Jackson Park, stops just in front of the lower level entrance.

## **AWARD FINALISTS**

Two of our local authors are listed as finalists for awards. Kris Rusch (Kris Nelscott) was a finalist for an Anthony for her short story, "The Secret Lives of Cats", which appeared in the July issue of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. Barbara Corrado Pope is a 2009 Oregon Book Award finalist for her debut mystery, *Cezanne's Quarry*.

*Oregon  
Cultural  
Trust  
Tax Credit*

Friends of Mystery is please to be designated as an Oregon non-profit cultural organization. Donations, including dues to FOM, qualify you to

make tax-free contributions to the Oregon Cultural Trust. If you donate up to \$500 (or up to \$1000 per couple filing jointly) this year to any Oregon non-profit cultural organization in Oregon you can also make a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust. That second donation will earn you a matching credit on your Oregon income tax. This is a tax credit, not deduction. Therefore, your contribution to the Trust doesn't cost you anything. Your contribution to Friends of Mystery would be a charitable tax deduction, and your contribution to the Oregon Cultural Trust will give you a dollar-for-dollar tax credit in the amount of tax due on the bottom line. The purpose of the tax credit is to stimulate direct giving to Oregon cultural non-profit organizations, while raising money for the Trust to distribute in grants. We hope you will take advantage of this unique opportunity. For more information, visit the website at [www.culturaltrust.org](http://www.culturaltrust.org), or your tax advisor.

*Friends of  
Mystery at  
Wordstock*

Friends of Mystery was fortunate to have Charity Heller Hogge, of Mighty Pen Editors, sponsor a table for us at Wordstock. Members John and Jack Walsdorf, Nancy Thomas, Carrie Richards, Jeannette Voss, and Bill Cameron all did "table time". They all reported that there was a lot of interest in our organization. We are truly grateful to Charity for her support as this is an event that we would not have been able to participate in without it.

*Bouchercon*

*2009*

*By Jeannette Voss*

Over a year ago, when Carrie Richards and I read that Michael Connelly was going to be the Guest of Honor at the 2009 Bouchercon, we registered for the convention. Neither of us had been to one before, so we weren't quite sure what to expect.

We arrived in Indianapolis late Wednesday evening, October 14th. We were staying at the Hyatt Hotel, where the convention was taking place. After a quick dinner we retired to our room to get some sleep.

We were up early so we could pick up our registration materials and make plans for the day – and there were plenty of things from which to choose. Throughout each of the three days, there were many panel discussions going on each hour. For example, on Thursday from 9:00 – 9:55 am, you could choose from the following:

- The Mean Streets of Indianapolis
- Killer Hobbies
- Men, Women and Murder Through the Ages
- Guidance From Writing Guides
- The Fanzines
- The James Bond Phenomenon

We had lots of fun attending the panels and the other activities, including the Guest of Honor interview with Michael Connelly, a talent show put on by some of the authors, and the Anthony Awards presentation: (The winner of the Anthony for Best Novel went to Michael Connelly for *The Brass Verdict*. Best First Novel went to Stieg Larsson for *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.)

There were author signings after every panel, and the Dealer's Room gave ample opportunity to indulge in purchasing those books that you just couldn't live without.

We had a great time and will be signing up for Bouchercon 2010 in San Francisco next October!