

# Jackson County Reads Mysteries

## Oregon—The State of Mystery

# Reading Writing and Publishing Crime Fiction

Saturday March 26, 2011

Medford Branch Library

panel 10a-12noon | 12-12:30 lunch on your own  
12:30-2p ask the experts

# PANELISTS

## Panelist Biographies

**Phil Messina:** When Messina was fifteen, he told his parents that he wanted to be a writer. They had images of their son living in the basement for the next forty years while Messina, unshaven, and in a tattered bathrobe, attempted to write the great American novel. They insisted that he plan on some kind of career so that he would have 'something to fall back on.' After forty or more years of 'falling back' with various jobs and his current profession, Messina's managed to write three, as yet unpublished, mystery novels. In his day job he is the City Manager for the City of Central Point. In his spare time he is the current coordinator of Southern Oregon Willamette Writers. [WillametteWriters.com](http://WillametteWriters.com)

**Tim Wohlforth's** thriller *Harry*, which deals with eco-terrorism and is set in the Northwest, was published in May 2010. *The Pink Tarantula*, a short story collection, is scheduled to be published by Perfect Crime Books. A contemporary noir novel, *No Time To Mourn*, was published in 2004. Wohlforth has published over 75 short stories. These appeared in *Hardcore Hardboiled* (Kensington), MWA's *Death Do Us Part*, (Little Brown), *Plots With Guns* (Dennis McMillan) and other anthologies. Two of his stories have made the "Distinguished Mystery Stories" list in Otto Penzler's *Best American Mystery* series. He is a Pushcart Prize Nominee and received a Certificate of Excellence from the Dana Literary Society. [TimWohlforth.com](http://TimWohlforth.com)

**Ken Lewis** lives with his wife, JaNell, and their black Lab, Sally, in Rogue River, Oregon where he is the chief of police. His first novel, *Little Blue Whales*, was the Public Safety Writers Association 2010 Grand Prize Winner for Fiction. His most recent novel, *The Sparrow's Blade*, was published on February 14, 2011. He has been in law enforcement for thirty years, but characterizes his career choice as having been that of "a writer, who eventually became a cop." [KennethRLewis.com](http://KennethRLewis.com)

**Robert Arellano** is the author of the Edgar-nominated noir *Havana Lunar* and two earlier novels, all published by Akashic Books. Writing as Eddy Arellano, he collaborated with three artists on the graphic novel *Dead in Desemboque* from Soft Skull Press, and as Bobby Rabyd he created the Web's first interactive novel, *Sunshine '69*. He lived for seven years in the small mountain town of Dixon, New Mexico, and last year he moved to the Rogue Valley to teach in the College of Arts & Sciences at Southern Oregon University. Arellano directs the Center for Emerging Media & Digital Arts (eMDA) at SOU. [EMDA.SOU.edu](http://EMDA.SOU.edu) and [Sunshine69.com](http://Sunshine69.com)

**Morgan Hunt** is the author of the Tess Camillo mysteries, featuring a contemporary Odd Couple, two women -- one lesbian, one straight; one ditzzy and dreamy, the other logical and linear-minded. They care deeply about each other through meals, jobs, love affairs, poker games and a bout with breast cancer. And then... they solve murders! Morgan Hunt was raised on the Jersey shore in Brigantine where she was fascinated with things like conch eggs and learning the Hebrew alphabet. Hunt played at college, enlisted in the Navy serving at Brunswick, Maine and San Diego, then worked for 25+ years in communications and public relations. She now hides out in the Pacific Northwest, twenty miles from the actual location of Einstein's brain. [Morgan-HuntBooks.com](http://Morgan-HuntBooks.com)

## PROGRAM

10:00-10:10. Welcome

10:10-10:15. Introduction

10:15-10:30. Oregon-The State of Mystery

10:30-10:45. Short Form Mystery

10:45-11:00. Break

11:00-11:15. Writing the Police Procedural

11:15-11:30. Get Good, Get Better, Get Published

11:30-11:45. Marketing Your Brand & Your Writing

11:45-12:00. Audience Questions

12:00-12:30. Lunch on Your Own or Order In

## Ask The Expert

12:30-2:00. Choose your expert, then rotate

# Oregon—The State of Mystery

## Reading, Writing, Publishing Crime Fiction

Welcome. Amy Blossom, Ashland Branch Manager, Jackson County Library Services. Introduction. Ed Battistella, Ashland Mystery Readers

**Oregon, The State of Mystery—Why We Love Mystery and Crime Fiction by Phil Messina**, Chair of the Southern Oregon Chapter of the Willamette Writers

**Short Form Mystery—Bare Bones Writing by Tim**

**Wohlforth.** The mystery began with the short story form. Edgar Allen Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Dashiell Hammett, and Raymond Chandler wrote mainly or only short stories. There is nothing in the novel that isn't also in a short story. What distinguishes a short story from a novel is not so much length as singularity. A novel is built on accumulation, a lot of characters, multiple points of view, subplots but no single effect. It requires concise, crisp writing. As Elmore Leonard says "try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip." Leave out nothing that is important to setting, character, plot. Include nothing that does not serve the purpose of your narrative.

*"Be a sadist. No matter how sweet and innocent your leading characters, make awful things happen to them - in order that the reader may see what they are made of."*

--Kurt Vonnegut

**Writing the Police Procedural—How to Do It by**

**Kenneth R. Lewis.** Believe it or not, you don't have to have ever been a police officer to write a good police procedural novel. Just as Westerns became a popular American icon in the 50's and early 60's through motion pictures and TV shows, and novels like "Shane," today's modern counterpart, the police drama, is alive and well, and thriving. Whether the tale is portrayed on the big screen or the small screen, in print, or displayed on a digital eBook reader, people never seem to tire of immersing themselves in the stories of our heroes in police blue or sheriff's tan, and their never ending quest to protect all of us from the forces of evil. As a fledgling mystery, suspense, or thriller writer, you already know more about the subject than you think. The explosion of the internet, and the dawning of the "Digital Age" have done much to contribute to your own personal immersion into the culture of the cop. I'll show you three free ways to hone and polish your police procedural writing techniques. But beware, one of these could mean you end up carrying a badge and gun, yourself.

**Get Good, Get Better, Get Published—Polishing, Presenting, Publishing by**

**Robert Arellano.** Noir or hard-boiled? Trade paperback or ePub? Agent or self-representation? In 21st Century publishing, now it matters more than ever to make a memorable impression on editors and -- for those who self-publish -- directly on readers. The query letter, book proposal, synopsis and sample chapters are all still essential parts of the process of getting published, getting read, and getting buzz; but how many of your '10,000 hours' are you going to dedicate to writing (and rewriting) well? Local workshops, online writers' communities, and low-residency university programs can all help the aspiring author refine her craft and hammer out a masterful draft. Robert Arellano, an Edgar-nominated author who has been at it (getting better and getting published) for 20 years, will share his experiences of turning passion into opportunity and will invite recommendations from the other authors on the panel.

**Marketing Your Brand and Your Mystery— Getting the Word Out by Morgan**

**Hunt.** So your book is written and you've figured out how to distribute it. Don't stop now, because the most exciting part of your writing career is just beginning. Learn how to package your book, with graphics, press releases, postcards and digital media. Make it easy for book groups to adopt your book and make it easier still for local libraries, bookstores and book clubs to publicize your visit. Develop and publicize your own personal brand, and boost your readership.

*"The solution, once revealed, must seem to have been inevitable."*

*--Raymond Chandler  
Casual Notes on the  
Mystery Novel (1949)*

# Oregon

## The State of Mystery

- **Reading, Writing and Publishing Crime Fiction**

Oregon—the State of Mystery: Reading, Writing and Publishing Crime Fiction is an event in Jackson County Reads Mysteries! Co-sponsored by Jackson County Library Services and Ashland Mystery Readers Group.



For more information on Jackson County's public libraries, visit [www.JCLS.org](http://www.JCLS.org). There's ebooks, videos and books on tape to download, online car repair manuals, genealogical databases, books to borrow, events to attend, meeting rooms to reserve and lots, lots more!. Love my library, no doubt about it. [JCLS.org](http://JCLS.org)



For more mystery in the valley, visit Ashland Mystery at [www.BooksAndOldLace.com](http://www.BooksAndOldLace.com). Nationally recognized and award winning authors visit Southern Oregon every year. Also, don't miss Ashland Mystery rvtv noir a monthly community access television series for mystery readers and writers, an exciting YouTube channel and Facebook page. Ashland Mystery supports mystery and crime fiction! [BooksAndOldLace.com](http://BooksAndOldLace.com)