

Lowen Clausen has been chosen as the 2004 recipient of the Friends Of Mystery's heralded Spotted Owl award for his book *Second Watch*. The book was published in 2003 by Silo Press and Penguin Putnam paperbacks. Clausen also won the award in 2000 for his debut book *First Avenue* and the repeat honor this year marks the first time in the history of the award that an author has won more than once. Committee member Pete Scott said of the book: "A very strong book with great characters and a setting that has the right feel", and fellow reader Maggie Stuckey said: "The slow, sweet rendering of Ballard - its people, its daily rhythms - is perfect".

This annual award was established in 1995, and is given to the best mystery novel of the year by an author who lives in the Pacific Northwest (Alaska, British Columbia, Canada, Idaho, Oregon or Washington). Previous winners are Earl Emerson, John Straley, Tom Mitchelltree, Linda 'L.L.' Thrasher, Marcia Simpson, Kate Wilhelm, and G.M. Ford

From the book: "When Seattle Police Officer Katherine Murphy transfers from a crime-ridden downtown district to the Second Watch footbeat in the Ballard neighborhood, her new partner, Grace Stevens, promises a quiet shift with only a drunk fisherman now and then, a merchant's complaint, a panhandler or two—a welcome relief for the young policewoman. No more violence from the mean streets on skid road, no more wearying shifts ending at 4:00 a.m. But Katherine's first greeting to the peaceful Scandinavian neighborhood won't come from the singing butcher on Ballard Avenue or the Danish grocery store owner, who is the mainstay of the community. Instead, she will gaze deeply into the lifeless eyes of a dead girl whose naked body, stuffed into trash bags, is found at a nearby garbage dump. Following his acclaimed novel of suspense, *First Avenue*, Lowen Clausen draws an authentic portrait of a community forced to face unspeakable crimes and the young police officer, Katherine Murphy, who must sort out her responses to pure evil and to children who desperately need her help."

Clausen worked as a police officer on the Seattle force for 13 years, beginning in the early 1970's. During those years Clausen also studied literature at the University of Washington and went on to build businesses in Seattle's Ballard district. In recent years he has divided his time between Washington and Nebraska, where he and his wife Patricia were born.

Elinore Rogers coordinated the reader's committee and for this year's award they evaluated 73 books. Runners up for The Spotted Owl Award were:

- 2) "A Blind Eye" by G.M. Ford
- 3) "Acts of Vengeance" by Frank Smith
- 4) "Fire Flight" by John Nance
- 5) "A Fistful Of Rain", by Greg Rucka
- 6) "Shaman Pass" by Stan Jones
- 7) "Land of the Blind" by Jess Walter
- 8) "Watch Them Die" by Kevin O'Brien
- 9) "Silent Proof" by Michael Hawley
- 10) "A Grave Denied" by Dana Stabenow

The Friends Of Mystery is a non-profit literary/educational organization headquartered in Portland, Oregon. For the past 22 years we have presented lectures, organized conferences, and sponsored reading groups. We also publish a regular newsletter. Our purpose is to promote the study, understanding and reading enjoyment of mystery literature.