



BOOKSELLERS

1323 S. Rangeline Rd
(in the Carmel Walk plaza)
Carmel, IN 46032

317-705-0979
toll-free: 800-643-6737
fax: 317-705-1402

staff@themysterycompany.com
www.themysterycompany.com

Preview weekend hours

Friday, 2/28: 4 - 8 pm
Saturday, 3/1: 10 am - 6 pm
Sunday, 3/2: noon - 4 pm

Grand opening

Friday, 3/7: 4 - 8 pm

Regular hours begin 3/8

Monday - Wednesday:
10:30 am - 5:30 pm
Thursday & Friday:
10:30 am - 8 pm
Saturday:
10 am - 6 pm
Sunday:
Noon - 4 pm

Newsletter #1 • February 28, 2003

Contents

What's a preview weekend?
Special opening offers
Join the company
Programs and services
Who we are
About our inventory
How we handle used books
Our publishing arm
Upcoming events

What's a preview weekend?

We're opening to give you an early peek at the store and for two events. We'll have much (though not all) of our stock in place, many (though not all) of our fixtures and shelving, and we'll be training staff. You're helping us test out our systems, and see how the space is working. Please be patient with us as we learn the ropes.

Special opening offers

- Special offer #1: Company membership is free through March 31st. See below for program details.
- Special offer #2: Take the Detecta-Crostics challenge and save \$4.00 off any purchase through March 16, 2003; see our separate flyer for details.
- Special offer #3: Get a free Mystery Company tee-shirt when you sign up for Company membership and purchase \$75 or more at the same time. This offer expires on March 31, 2003 or when supplies of the shirt are exhausted.

Join the company!

Mystery Company annual membership will cost \$6.00, but for the month of March, you can join our program for free. Company membership comes with many perks, including:

- A discount on your purchases that begins at 6% and goes up to 10% for the rest of the year after you spend \$300. Once you reach the \$300 spending level, your next year's membership is free and your discount remains at 10%. Your membership renewals will always be free as long as you spend \$300 each year.
- While Company memberships are in an individual's name, each member of your immediate family can take advantage of the pro-

gram. We keep track of memberships here on our computer — no card for you to carry around.

- A special reward program for younger readers — all readers who've not yet graduated from high school. Each child in your family signs up individually, as part of the family's membership. For every 25 books — new or used — purchased by the child, he or she will get a certificate worth \$5 towards anything in our store. When they reach 100 books, they'll get a special free Mystery Company "100" tee-shirt too. Kids must be present at the time of the purchase, and must use their certificates in person. Of course, kids will also receive the family discount (of 6% or 10%) on their purchases.
- We take used books only from Company Members, who will receive credit good towards the purchase of anything in the store.
- Company Members can get an early look at forthcoming books through our Friends & Neighbors program. We'll offer a selection of advance reading copies of new mysteries. You may borrow one ARC at a time without charge. All we ask is that you return the ARC with your comments about the book — a sentence, a paragraph, whatever you have to say about it (positive or negative) — and that you allow us to use your comments in the store, on our website and in our newsletter. Here's a chance to express your opinions, and also to find out what your friends and neighbors are recommending.
- We'll mail our store newsletter to Company members without charge. In our newsletter, you'll learn about new books and store events.
- We keep track of Company member purchases on our computer, and will use this information to let you know when new books by your favorites arrive in the store.
- Our privacy policy is strict: we will never sell, rent or otherwise share your information with others. We will use the information only to tell

you about new books, and about special store offers (by phone and by mail, including email)— and nothing else.

Programs and services

In addition to the programs that are part of your Mystery Company membership, we are also in the process of launching many others, including:

- A mystery discussion group. Let us know if you're interested, and we'll keep you posted on our plans.
- A special parent/child discussion group, with mysteries for adults specially chosen for suitability for younger readers. (We are especially interested in how mysteries model problem-solving — for all readers, not just younger ones.)
- Author events. We'll bring in mystery writers as often as we're able. Each event will begin with authors reading from and/or talking about their work. Authors will then take your questions, then sign copies of their books. Events last about one hour, and are always free — through we may, from time to time, require advance tickets or reservations for some events.
- Our Deadly Destinations "travel" service will help you find mysteries set anywhere in the world, and match them up with a guidebook. Tell us where you want to go, and we'll research books and find them for you. (We've always enjoyed learning about new places through mysteries. Jennie and I planned our honeymoon using Jane Langton's wonderful novel *Dark Nantucket Noon*.)
- Special orders. Though we are a mystery specialty store, we are also an independent bookshop with access to tens of thousands of books in all categories. We are happy to try to special order anything for you. In most cases, your Company discount will apply to special orders too.

We're always interested in hearing your ideas. Let us know what you'd like to see.

Who we are

The Mystery Company is an independent bookstore owned by Jim Huang and Jennie Jacobson. Readers forever, we became professionally involved in the mystery genre in 1982 when we founded The Drood Review of Mystery, a newsletter featuring reviews and previews of new books. The Drood celebrated its 20th anniversary in September 2002, and copies are available for sale here in the store.

Jim's first experience in bookselling was at Spenser's Mystery Bookshop on Newbury Street in Boston, where he worked for four and a half years taking care of the new book side of the store. In 1992, we moved to Michigan, where we opened Deadly Passions Bookshop on the mall in downtown Kalamazoo. Deadly Passions stayed open for seven and a half years, but we were doomed when downtown Kalamazoo lost a third of its workforce overnight as a result of a merger. By the time we left, we were surrounded by vacant space. Jim was part of a group of booksellers who founded the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association in 1992, and he served as the group's second director, during which time he coordinated IMBA's 100 Favorite Mysteries of the Century project.

In addition to the Drood, Jim has also published several reference books for mystery readers, including four books based on material first published in the newsletter in 1989 through 1997. Jim revived his publishing business, The Crum Creek Press, in 2000 to put together a book based on the IMBA 100 list. The book went on to win the Agatha and Anthony Awards for best reference work in the mystery genre for the year. Jim also edited and published *They Died in Vain*, a guide to overlooked, underappreciated and forgotten mystery novels. This book has just been nominated for the Agatha Award for best reference book of 2002.

Jennie and her mother, Jeanne M. Jacobson, are the authors of the new book from The Crum Creek Press, *Detecta-Crostics: Puzzles of Mystery*. This unique book introduces a new form of challenging puzzles for lovers of mystery and wordplay.

The Crum Creek Press is launching a new imprint in 2003; see "Our publishing arm" for details.

Jim and Jennie met in college (at Swarthmore) and have been married for 17 years. We've lived in Carmel since 2000, and have two daughters, Grace (at Clay Junior High) and Miranda (at Mohawk Trails Elementary). Jennie works full-time at Eli Lilly as a medical writer.

We are fortunate to have two terrific part-timers working with us at the start, Moni Draper and Edna Stewart. We'll introduce them in subsequent newsletters. We're also still looking for one more part-time person. Please let us know if you're interested.

About our inventory

For our preview weekend, we'll have much (though not all) of our inventory in place. Books are still arriving daily.

Though we stock and sell (and enjoy) many of the bestsellers, our emphasis will be on books that you may not find elsewhere, especially on books from small and alternative presses that are not well-represented in the chain stores.

Through April 30, we're featuring a special display of books from The Rue Morgue Press — one of the finest of the small presses in the mystery genre today, a company that really helps make mystery reading and bookselling so much fun right now. This company's mission is to reprint mysteries from the 1930s through 1950s, books that helped make the genre so popular in the first place. Many of the Rue Morgue titles are in the style of '40s screwball comedies (think Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell, Kathryn Hepburn, William Powell and Myrna Loy), and they're just a delight. We especially recommend that you try Constance and Gwenyth Little, if you're not already familiar with their madcap stories.

In our opening day inventory, you'll find many books from our Kalamazoo store days, 1992-1999. You'll also find some books that are even older; in 1995, we bought the inventory of a bookshop in Illinois that went out of business. We still have some

good older books from this purchase — I'm really fond of the books by M.R.D. Meek and Phoebe Atwood Taylor — and are pleased to be able to offer them to you here.

How we handle used books

We accept used books only from Mystery Company members, who are welcome to drop off one bag or box of used paperbacks or hardcovers at any time. If you have more than one bag or box of books, you'll need to call ahead and make an appointment to bring them in.

We price books individually — we do not use a fixed percentage of the original cover price either to calculate what we can offer you for your books or to price them. Instead, our pricing is based primarily on the book's condition, how common it is, how desirable it is, and how many copies of it we already have. We offer more for hard-to-find books that are in excellent condition that many readers are looking for. We will turn down anything that's excessively worn, that we already have in multiple copies or that we deem unsellable. We take only mysteries; please don't bring in anything outside the genre.

Generally, we sell used paperbacks at about half of the original cover price, but that number can be higher or lower, depending on the title. Once we determine our selling price, we offer you 40% of our selling price in store credit. You can use the credit to buy anything in the store — new or used.

Because we price books one at a time (and initially because only Jim will be doing the pricing), we normally can't make you an offer right away. After you drop off your books, we'll get to them within a day or two to let you know whether we can take them and how much we can offer for them. You'll then be able to use your credit on your next visit.

Our publishing arm

In February 2003, Jim's book publishing business, The Crum Creek Press, launched a new imprint to publish fiction. The new imprint shares its name (and its mission of helping you find mysteries you'll enjoy) with our store — The Mystery Company.

Our initial plans are to reprint mysteries that are part of ongoing series that haven't received the attention and distribution they deserved. Our first title is Kate Flora's *Chosen for Death*, her 1994 first novel and the first in her Thea Kozak series. Coming soon is Terence Faherty's *Kill Me Again*.

Upcoming events

Friday, March 14 at 7 pm: Eileen Dreyer, author of *With a Vengeance*, a new thriller published by St. Martin's Press.

Tuesday, May 6 at 7 pm: Three British mystery writers, Stephen Booth, Danuta Reah and Donald Hale.

We'll have more details about these events in subsequent newsletters.



1323 S. Rangeline Rd
(in the Carmel Walk plaza)
Carmel, IN 46032

317-705-0979
toll-free: 800-643-6737
fax: 317-705-1402

staff@themysterycompany.com
www.themysterycompany.com