

**THURSDAY**  
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# Bandon Western WORLD

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## Author sets mystery in Bandon

By Geneva Miller  
Contributing Writer

Grab your Kevlar and fasten your seatbelt. Launching his first mystery novel, "Drago No. 1," Bandon writer Art Spinella takes readers on a breakneck tour of Coos County.

A journey with character Nick Drago and his buddy Sal Rand is a big boy romp through the back woods and sloughs surrounding Bandon, complete with fast cars, big guns and loud aircraft. Spinella's goal was to craft a fun read with enough buddy dynamic to keep readers engaged.

The friendship between Drago and Rand is fueled by coffee, donuts and pizza, and a steady banter that covers every topic from politics to pop culture.

"I've always had one good friend I could do that with," said Spinella.

Local friend David Kimes is one of those. It was their mutual interest in classic cars that brought Kimes and Spinella together.

"He's a tremendously well respected automotive analyst," noted Kimes.

Of course, Kimes says he and Spinella don't limit their conversation to cars. So when Spinella asked Kimes for his opinions on the best way to heist a Thunderbird, Kimes didn't know he was troubleshooting ideas for Spinella's mystery.

Spinella has a long history as a nationally known journalist, editor and researcher. He moved to Bandon in 1983 with his wife Stephanie. Their five children grew up attending Bandon schools. The Spinella's Bandon based firm, CNW Research, publishes independent reports on marketing, industry and economics. Spinella started work on the first Drago mystery while he was recovering from surgery. His interest in automobiles and international trade are evident in his fiction.

Readers will undoubtedly spot influences from the Hardy Boys series and Mickey Spillane novels, among other classic crime dramas. Spinella says he wanted to capture the feel of 19th century mysteries set in the English countryside. Bandon, with its rich cultural history, was his first choice of setting. The classic Thunderbird heist that gets characters Drago and Rand off the front porch was based on the real-life theft of a friend's custom Harley Davidson motorcycle.

"He still cries about it because he can't find anything like it," said Spinella.

Spinella's own enthusiasm for the Harley brand is evident in the book. He compares a ride on a Harley to a religious experience, "With big twin Harleys, blind-fold a rider and he can pick out the Milwaukee brethren in a sea of competitive bikes by the feel of the seat, location of the pedals, draw of the levers .... To the BMW rider, Harleys are ponderous farm implements, big, heavy and requiring muscle. To Harley owners, they're the exclamation point on mastering machinery, akin to breaking a wild horse ..."

Kimes is just one local personality to find his way into the pages of Spinella's novel. In fact, only a long-time Bandon resident could convincingly put words like "horse pukey" in his character's mouths, or cast golfers too intent on their game to care about the Cobra helicopter hovering over the 16th hole. After years living in Bandon, Spinella says he appreciates the local color and candor of coffee shop conversation.

"They're so open about everything they think and I like that," Spinella said about his neighbors. "That's

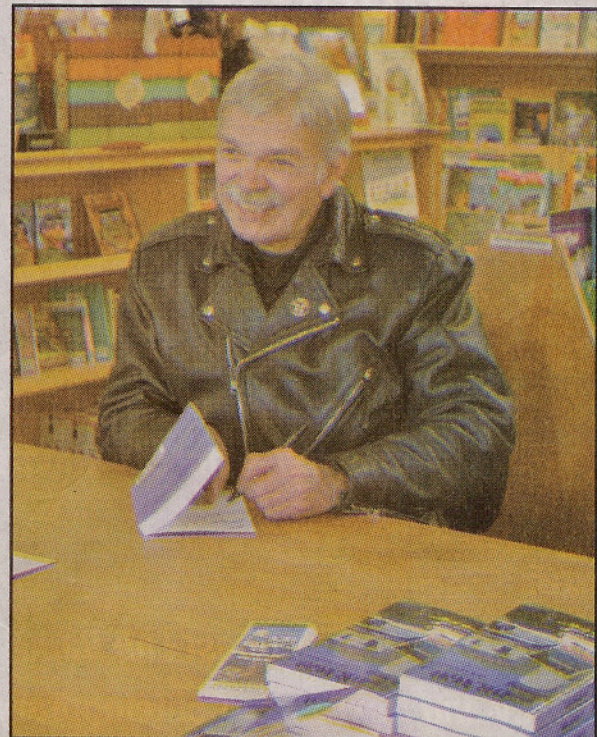


Photo by Geneva Miller

### Book signing

Art Spinella of Bandon signs his new murder mystery book at an event at Winter River Books.

why I thought this town would be a great location for fiction."

The classic car theft that jump starts the Drago mystery is quickly followed by a series of murders. Even confirming the identity of the diseased raises questions for Drago and Rand. The mystery is a 3D jigsaw puzzle of clues involving local professionals, regional investigative reporters, Japanese shipping companies and KGB operatives.

"I had more fun," said Spinella of his first book signing at Winter River Books in Old Town, where the book is available. The self-published debut also is available through select mystery bookstores and Amazon.com. Spinella, who envisions the Drago saga as a 12-part series, is already at work on book two. For a peek at the series, visit [www.cnwmr.com/Drago](http://www.cnwmr.com/Drago).