

Oregon State hires expert to fight slug menace

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press



Courtesy of Rory McDonnell
Rory McDonnell, hunts for slugs in Ireland in this undated photo. McDonnell has been selected as OSU's new slug expert.



Courtesy of Robin Rosetta, OSU
European red slugs are quite common in gardens and landscapes.

Oregon State University has hired a new invertebrate pest scientist to help farmers fight the slug menace threatening their crops.

In 2015, farmers complained that damage from the slimy mollusks has grown worse in recent years during a "slug summit" organized by OSU, prompting the university to seek additional resources to battle the problem.

While slugs have long been a pest for Oregon growers, some believe their populations have grown more numerous in recent years due to the popularity of no-till farming and diminished field burning.

The slug researcher job was among several new positions

created at OSU thanks to an additional \$14 million in fund-

ing allocated for agricultural research and extension during the 2015 legislative session.

The search for OSU's slug expert was recently com-

pleted with the hiring of Rory McDonnell, who's currently a research specialist at the University of California—Riverside and will start

his new position in Oregon in mid-July.

A native of Ireland, McDonnell obtained a doctorate in environmental science from the National University of Ireland in 2004 and has since studied biological control of slugs, including a nematode that parasitizes them.

OSU was initially concerned that few people with sufficient expertise in slugs would apply for the job, but was ultimately able to choose from a good pool of candidates, said Sujaya Rao, an entomology professor at the university who headed the hiring committee.

It was important for OSU to find a researcher who's familiar with applied science — managing slug pests — rather than simply studying slug biology, she said.

McDonnell's experience with using biological control agents and essential oils to combat the mollusks was impressive, as was his ability to win grant funding and train graduate and post-doctoral students, Rao said.

Novel methods of controlling slugs are increasingly important because the baits that are commonly used to attract and kill them aren't always economical, she said.

"People are looking outside the box for slug management," Rao said.

While recruiting for the position, OSU consulted farmers as well as representatives of the USDA, Oregon Department of Agriculture and local soil and water conservation districts, she said.

"We got input from everyone," Rao said.

Humorist Garry Shandling dies at 66; fellow comedians laud his genius

By **ANTHONY MCCARTNEY**
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES — While Garry Shandling's fellow comedians fought to host a late-night show, he brushed away the prospect.

"I would not do a show where you just sit and talk to somebody," the humorist said in 1993 when he was courted by NBC to succeed David Letterman on "Late Night."

He'd blown up the format with "The Larry Sanders Show," the HBO series about the making of a fictional talk show that drew on his own neurotic self-absorption — and that of Hollywood — for exquisite satire.

Doctors said that Shandling, 66, died Thursday of an apparent heart attack, according to Alan Nierob, his spokesman. Shandling, who was taken to a hospital after paramedics were dispatched to his Brentwood home, had no history of heart trouble, Nierob said.

Coroner's Lt. David Smith said it appeared Shandling died of natural causes but an official cause of death determination had not yet been made. No autopsy was planned, but officials would determine Shandling's cause of death based on medical records and his medical history.

His death prompted an outpouring of respect and affection from the comedy community.

"Garry Shandling was one of the most brilliant people I have ever known," Billy Crystal tweeted. Steve Martin lauded Shandling's "beautifully unpredictable mind" in a Twitter post.

Shandling had a face and voice made for comedy, with pillowy lips that delivered punchlines in a tone that verged on whining.

In a 2009 interview with The Associated Press, he explained his perspective on his art.

"The answer isn't gonna be in the facts," he said. "It's gonna be in intuition. That's how I work creatively. I'm always teaching people that the answer

to that creative question is right here, in the room, between us here."

More to the point, it was dealing with the questions he confronted in himself.

Born on Nov. 29, 1949 in Chicago, Shandling was raised in Tucson, Arizona. On arriving in Los Angeles as a young adult, it was a short hop from a brief stint in the advertising business to comedy writing and stand-up.



Garry Shandling

Then in the 1980s, he began to experiment with TV comedy, and to toy with the sitcom form, with his first series, "It's Garry Shandling's Show," a Showtime project that made no bones about its inherently artificial nature: The actors in this other-

wise standard domestic comedy routinely broke the fourth wall to comment on what they were up to. Even the theme song began with the explana-

tory lyrics, "The theme to Garry's show..."

Then, in August 1992, Shandling created for HBO his comic masterpiece with "The Larry Sanders Show," which starred him as an egomaniacal late-night TV host with an angst-ridden show-biz life behind the scenes.

It was just three months after Johnny Carson had retired from "The Tonight Show," where Shandling had appeared as a stand-up and

occasional Carson stand-in. It seemed a wry but deeply felt homage to the King of Late Night.

But it was more. "Larry Sanders" proved to be an act of courage, a brave effort led by someone portraying a character dangerously close to himself. As Larry, Shandling dug deep to confront his own demons, and did it brilliantly as the series teetered between dual realities: public and private; make-believe and painfully true.

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