

Commentary... Celebrating a passion for books

By Macgregor Hay
Guest Columnist

This August in Edinburgh, Scotland, I will join people from around the world who love good literature, talented authors, and captivating reading at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. I'll mingle with authors and attendees who share a love of books, while experiencing stimulating presentations by well-known and emerging writers.

Since 1983, Edinburgh has hosted the International Book Festival, this year running from August 12-28, 2017 with 1,000 authors from 45 countries

In 2016 I met authors Ian Rankin, Kenny MacAskill, Stuart MacBride, Peter May, Ruth Dudley Edwards and Alexander McCall Smith. These were personal and stimulating experiences. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's interview with Makar (national poet for Scotland) Jackie Kay was heartwarming and inspirational.

At a local pub, The Oxford, Ian Rankin shared his take on Scottish weather for my 10 days in Edinburgh (and was 100 percent accurate!). Murray Pittock and

Ruth Dudley Edwards presented historical observations on the Irish 1916 uprising and the Battle of Culloden, both of them insightful and different from the popular viewpoint.

In Charlotte Square Gardens, located in downtown Edinburgh, eight audience theaters, two book shops, three food cafés, two pubs, free wifi and outstanding speakers, with a Festival staff dedicated to providing first-rate service await. This year two new venues have been added on George Street near the entrance to the Charlotte Square Gardens.

"Over 800 writers joined us in Charlotte Square Gardens, thus once again creating the world's biggest book festival, and the feedback suggests that it is easily one of the best-loved by writers and audiences alike," says the Festival website.

The onsite author sessions are one hour including audience participation, culminating with book signings and an opportunity to informally chat with your favorite author. Each author discusses their books, inspiration, style and commitment to the craft of writing. Festivalgoers are friendly, enthusiastic and love to

engage in conversations about books.

A popular feature of the Festival is the extensive Children's, Teen and Young Adult programs with authors and illustrators. Jim Kay, Rebecca Cobb, David Melling and Laura Ellen Anderson participated in 2016.

This year's theme, "Brave New Words" coupled with 11 individual program themes and the slate of authors is now available online. Tickets can be purchased online starting June 20, 2017. The website, edbookfest.co.uk, is easy to navigate to review selections and buy tickets.

The entire 18 days provide extraordinary customer service thanks to the Festival staff and volunteers. I recommend it to all.

A sampling of posts on the Festival website is evidence of the popularity of the annual event:

"We are all convinced the Book Festival is the most important cultural and educational event in Europe."

Climb that hill no matter how steep...



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Cyclists grind it out on the McKenzie Highway.

Oregon untested rape kits numbers quadruple

SALEM (AP) — Oregon officials say the number of untested rapes kits have quadrupled over the past two years despite efforts to process them faster.

The Statesman Journal reports half of the 2,800 untested rape kits sent to Utah last year have been processed, but that work was not enough to put the state back on track. Oregon State Police reported a backlog of 884 newly submitted assault forensic

evidence kits as of April.

Marion County Deputy District Attorney Katie Suver says the increase might be due to a new state law, which requires all untested kits, even those prepared years ago, be tested.

Oregon lawmakers set aside \$1.5 million to hire nine crime lab analysts. Public Information Officer Bill Fugate says the new analysts will complete their training by the end of December.

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		Tues.....	Black Bean