

Commentary...

The reading life

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Sisters is getting set to celebrate the reading life. The Sisters Festival of Books runs Friday-Sunday, October 18-20.

There are few things more worthy of celebration than books and the strange and wonderful people who create them. Writing a book is a damnably difficult business, and far more books are started than are finished. Inspiration can give you a good start, but only discipline can carry you through to completion. And that's to say nothing about all the work involved in getting a book out into the hands of readers, whether you are traditionally published or are doing the work yourself.

It's a giant pain and best to be avoided, if you can. Thing is, most writers just... can't. They HAVE to write. David Joy, who is featured at this weekend's festival, described the overwhelming compulsion to get a story down on paper and out into the world: "It feels almost terminal, like if I don't get the words out then it'll be the end of me."

Well, I, for one, am grateful that these intrepid souls are so driven, for they have given me gifts beyond price.

Books made me. Reading the propulsive pulp stories of Robert E. Howard and the gritty yet romantic frontier novels of Will Henry made me say, "I want to do THAT!" and set me on the path to making my living with the pen. My brother's gift of Allan W. Eckert's historical novel "The Frontiersmen" introduced me to the Kentucky woods-ranger Simon Kenton, and the Shawnee resistance leader Tecumseh. From that seed grew a lifetime of frontier studies — and my own book.

Non-readers often think that we readers aren't actually *doing* anything when we're reading — but they are oh so wrong. We're living a thousand lives, right there on the couch. My wife, Marilyn, once had to shout at me to get my attention while I was reading Tim Willocks' brilliant novel "The Religion," which depicts the 1565 Great Siege of Malta by the Turkish army of Suleiman the Magnificent. She laughed at me as I tore myself from

the page and stared at her blankly, like I'd just woken up from a deep slumber.

All I could tell her was that it takes some time to get back from 1565 to the 21st century. A good book does that to you. It carries you away, and returns you home changed, like Bilbo Baggins returning to The Shire from the Lonely Mountain.

As you've no doubt deduced, my tastes run heavily to blood-and-thunder — and that's true of both my fiction and non-fiction reading. My poor, dear mother early on gave up trying to elevate my barbaric tastes — and defended them when I got in trouble in sixth grade for bringing Hunter S. Thompson's "Hell's Angels" to free reading day.

Not that anybody's tastes need defending, but that blood-and-thunder section boasts some extraordinary writers. When you combine 100-proof storytelling with writing chops honed to a razor's edge, you've got something that makes the blood sing, something as

timeless and soul-stirring as "Beowulf." Willocks has it; so do James Carlos Blake and Cormac McCarthy. And so does David Joy, who will tear himself away from his beloved forests, streams, and mountains to carry the coals of story to us right here in Sisters.

Of course there are myriad literary paths to take, and the Sisters Festival of Books offers a bunch of them. That's another wondrous thing about the reading life: Whatever your pleasure, whatever worlds you seek to explore, someone has marked trail for you, and there are mysterious legions of fellow travelers who share your love for the journey and the destination.

So, this weekend we gather in the Great Hall to hail the spinners of tales, the creators of worlds. We'll try not to break the mead benches.




HAPPY HOUR
MON-FRI 4-7pm

KJ ANNIE KARAOKE NIGHTS!
FRI. & SAT. at 9pm

Prime Rib Fridays 5pm!

175 N. Larch St.
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Tues., Oct. 22 • 6-9 p.m.
Sisters Science Club
Dr. Jerry Freilich

Fri., Oct. 25 • 8-11:30 p.m.
Halloween Extravaganza
Costume party dance throwdown!

Thurs., Dec. 5 • 7 p.m.
Walter Trout Band
Blues guitarist, singer, songwriter.
Pub opens 1 hour prior to shows.
302 E. Main | 541-815-9122
BelfryEvents.com



FIRESIDE SHOW

LORENA LEIGH

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21
5PM DOORS/6 PM SHOW

\$8 ADVANCE/\$12 AT DOOR
ALL AGES. SKIP OPEN FOR DINNER AND DRINKS



13300 HWY 20, SISTERS, OR // WWW.THESUTTLELODGE.COM/HAPPENINGS

SISTERS-AREA

Entertainment & Events

OCT 16 WED

Fika Sisters Coffeehouse Coffee & Connections at Jobb 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Connect with remote workers & other professionals. For more info call 541-588-0311.

Sisters Saloon Poker Night 7 p.m. Every Wednesday! \$20. For information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersssaloon.net.

OCT 17 THUR

Cork Cellars Tasty Thursday Hosted Wine Tasting 5 to 7 p.m. For additional information call 541-549-2675 or go online to corkcellarswinebistro.com.

Sisters Saloon Karaoke Night 9 p.m. to midnight. Every Thursday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersssaloon.net.

OCT 18 FRI

FivePine Lodge Sisters Festival of Books Local Author Reception 5 to 7 p.m. Light hors d'oeuvres with 13 local authors. Tickets and information at SistersFoB.com or call 541-549-0866.

Fika Sisters Coffeehouse Game Night until 8 p.m. Bring your own games & friends or find them there! Call 541-588-0311 for more information.

Hardtails Bar & Grill KJ Annie Rawkstar Karaoke Night! 9 p.m. Every Friday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

OCT 19 SAT

Sisters Middle School Sisters Festival of Books Author Readings & Presentations 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Author readings, presentations, signings, and a pop-up bookstore. Tickets and info at SistersFoB.com or call 541-549-0866.

Cork Cellars Live Music with Derek Michael Marc 6:30-8:30 p.m. No cover! For information call 541-549-2675 or go online to corkcellarswinebistro.com.

Hardtails Bar & Grill KJ Annie Rawkstar Karaoke Night! 9 p.m. Every Saturday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

OCT 20 SUN

Paulina Springs Books Sisters Festival of Books Family & Community Events 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free and open to the public. Info at SistersFoB.com or call 541-549-0866.

OCT 22 TUES

The Belfry Biodiversity Begins with a Bee Sisters Science Club presentation by Dr. Jerry Freilich. 7 p.m. Social Hour at 6 p.m. \$5 admission. Call 541-912-0750 or go to sistersscienceclub.org.

Sisters Saloon Trivia Night 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sign-up is at 6:15 p.m. Free, every Tuesday! For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersssaloon.net.

OCT 23 WED

Fika Sisters Coffeehouse Coffee & Connections at Jobb 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Connect with remote workers & other professionals. For more info call 541-588-0311.

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OCT 24 THUR

Cork Cellars Tasty Thursday Hosted Wine Tasting 5 to 7 p.m. For additional information call 541-549-2675 or go online to corkcellarswinebistro.com.

Sisters Saloon Karaoke Night 9 p.m. to midnight. Every Thursday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersssaloon.net.

OCT 25 FRI

The Belfry Halloween Costume Party with Live Music 8 p.m. For information call 541-815-9122 or go to BelfryEvents.com.

Fika Sisters Coffeehouse Game Night until 8 p.m. Bring your own games & friends or find them there! Call 541-588-0311 for more information.

Hardtails Bar & Grill KJ Annie Rawkstar Karaoke Night! 9 p.m. Every Friday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

OCT 26 SAT

Chops Bistro Live Music with Bob Baker & Mark Barringer 6 to 8 p.m. Fiddle and guitar music. For additional information call 541-549-6015.

Hardtails Bar & Grill KJ Annie Rawkstar Karaoke Night! 9 p.m. Every Saturday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

Events Calendar listings are free to advertisers. Submit items by 5 p.m. Fridays to lisa@nuggetnews.com