

## Hot tickets

### POWOWS

The Exhibit: Museum of Natural History at the University of Michigan will show an hour-long video at 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 5 called *Into the Circle: An Introduction to Native American Powwows*. Admission is free. The video is a colorful and informative guide on how to best enjoy attending a powwow and includes interviews with tribal elders, dancers and singers who help viewers know what to look and listen for. It runs in conjunction with the Museum's exhibit, *Jingtomak: Exploring the Powwow Highway*. The museum is located at 1109 Geddes, Ann Arbor. (734) 764-0478.

### At Wayne State

Eddie Collins (left) and Michael Anthony perform a scene from the Hilbert Theatre's production of *The Good Doctor*. Neil Simon's comic tribute to Anton Chekhov.



The play opens Friday Oct. 4 and runs in rotating repertory through Dec. 7. Call Wayne State University Theatre box office for show times and ticket prices at (313) 577-9772.

### Silver screen

Catch Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn in *Pat and Mike* at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 1 at Showcase Cinemas Pontiac 6-12, 2400 S. Telegraph, Bloomfield Hills. Admission is \$1. (248) 334-6777.

### Acoustic concert

See Al Petteway and Amy White in concert Saturday Oct. 5 at the Acoustic Avenue Coffee House in the First United Methodist Church, 22331 Woodward Avenue, just south of Nine Mile in Ferndale. Doors open at 7 p.m.; concert starts at 8 p.m. Admission is \$15. \$10 for senior citizens and students. The Michigan Fingersh Guitar Society sponsors the show. (248) 646-4030.

### Film Theatre

Rain is the richly evocative feature debut of New Zealand filmmaker Christine Jeffs. Based on Kirsty Gunn's acclaimed novel and featuring a haunting soundtrack by Neil Finn of Crowded House, *Rain* was one of the most breathtaking discoveries of the 2001 Cannes Film Festival. It plays at 7 and 9 p.m., Friday-Saturday, Oct. 4-5 and 4 and 7 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 6, at the Detroit Institute of Arts' Detroit Film Theatre. Admission is \$6 per person; \$5 for senior citizens and students with ID. The theater box office opens one hour before each show. (313) 833-3237.

### Grab a brush!

It's a tradition at the Detroit Zoo. The Parade Company - which stages the annual Thanksgiving Day Parade in Detroit - washes its big parade balloons every fall in the Detroit Zoo parking lot. You can watch the action from 10 a.m.-noon, Sunday, Oct. 6, at the zoo, located at Woodward and the I-696 service drive in Royal Oak. The zoo's parade float also will be on hand. The zoo is open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (248) 541-5777.

# Michigan mystery, western novelist publishes 50th book

BY KURT ANTHONY KRUG  
CORRESPONDENT

The release of *Black Powder, White Smoke* marks the 50th novel written by best-selling author Loren D. Estleman.

"I enjoy the process of creativity, of making stuff up, and get paid doing it. It's more fun to draw from fantasy and write from your imagination," says Estleman, 50, who works out of his 120-acre home in Whitmore Lake, a city where he has been a lifelong resident. He lives with his wife, fellow writer Deborah Morgan, whom he met at a Western Writers of America Convention in Wyoming more than a decade ago.

"I'm one of those lucky people who gets paid to do what he loves to do."

The author says he's been writing since he could hold a pencil, something he claims to have been born with.

"Must've been a painful birth," he quips.

Estleman - who does all of his work on a manual typewriter because he hates computers with a passion - has been a professional author for nearly 27 years, switching back and forth from the mystery genre to the western genre.

*Black Powder, White Smoke* is his 16th western novel.

It is the story of Honey Bourille, a freed slave turned gangfighter in New Orleans, who runs a brothel. Honey is forced to kill a white customer after he savagely manhandles one of his girls, forcing him to go on the run. In San Francisco, white gangfighter Emerson Emerson a.k.a. Twice Emerson, a Union Army deserter turned Confederate guerrilla, goes on the lam after killing a Chinese man.

In the middle of his life is falling for Ernest Torbert, who wants to raise the legends of the two gangfighters to a status rivaling

Buffalo Bill Cody's, and arranges a face-off between the Honey and Twice.

"There's very different views of the same book, giving readers an alternate view of the west," Estleman says. "When writing historical fiction, the time and place doesn't exist any longer and you have to research it. It's difficult to pin down the way people spoke; you don't want to use contemporary language for obvious reasons. It's subtle things like that that are harder to pin down."

### FAVORITE CHARACTERS

Six of Estleman's western novels feature one of his popular characters, Page Murdock, a deputy U.S. Marshall whom the author describes as a cowboy taming the wild frontier for Harlan A. Blaine Byrne, a federal judge, who lives by the law while Murdock has lives by the gun. The two have what Estleman calls a love/hate relationship.

"Page Murdock is a lawless lawman. He's a killer, but not an evil killer. He makes up his own rules - his own law - as he goes along," Estleman explains.

Estleman, who recently completed a two-year term as the president of the Western Writers of America, is an authority on the American West and criminal history. During his long career, he has received 15 national writing awards, and has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Allan Poe Award, and England's Silver Dagger Award.

This past April, Estleman served as the spring commencement speaker and received an honorary doctorate from Eastern Michigan University (EMU), something he calls "one of the greatest thrills of my life." He earned his bachelor's degree in journalism and English literature at EMU in 1974.

"I only went into journalism to learn my trade and sharpen my skills. I was a good writer but not a particularly good reporter. There are journalists who become novelists. There are novelists who become journalists to pay the bills. I was in the latter category," says Estleman, who has worked the police beat at *The Detroit News*, the *Ann Arbor News*, the *Ypsilanti Press*, and the *Dexter Leader*.

"I am as good a writer I think I am because of the editing. There are times when I say, 'How dare they edit me!' and then say, 'Damn it, they're right.' I believe talent is something you are born with and skill is something you acquire over time."

### MYSTERY NOVELS

The versatile author is just at home writing mysteries as he is Westerns. Drawing upon his time on the police beat and his rich knowledge of Detroit, he created his most famous character,

Amos Walker, a cynical and hard-boiled private investigator cut from the same cloth as Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe. He describes Walker as a quintessential American hero who lives by his own code.

Estleman's latest mystery novel, featuring Walker in his 15th adventure, *Sinister Heights*, was released earlier this year. The plot centers around the Detroit automotive industry where a prominent auto executive's young widow hires Walker to find her late husband's illegitimate children.

Also released this year was *Something Borrowed*, *Something Black*, his first novel featuring professional hitman Peter Macklin since 1986. The author describes Macklin as an experiment.

"The reason I created Macklin is that I am fascinated with the kind of a killer-for-hire. Most fiction makes killers psychopaths. Macklin is not. He is a character who makes his career out of killing people, yet he has

a wife and family but doesn't talk about what he does; he has no confidants. Macklin is an amoral character and it's a challenge not to make him sympathetic but make him interesting enough so people can care about him," Estleman says.

"Amos Walker is my foundation and backbone. He allows me to experiment with other characters, such as Peter Macklin. I can always get back to him because I've got a ready and waiting audience," he continues.

Estleman's books have been translated into 23 languages and have received rave reviews from critics and fellow authors alike.

He has received acclaim from Elmore "Dutch" Leonard, a New York Times Best-Selling author who lives in Bloomfield Hills.

And he has received plenty of fan mail from his readers, including the late Mel Tormé, a popular jazz singer from the 1940s and 1950s.

"Receiving a letter from my readers thanking me for my books means the world to me," he says. "I've connected with them. It gets me through those rough spots when writing a novel and I'm questioning why I do what I do. That's the best thing about writing."

Visit Estleman on his Web site, [www.lorenestleman.com](http://www.lorenestleman.com).



## Be aware of surroundings, detail when shooting photos

There are many places where good pictures can be found, but it is easy to overlook them. Often, they are camouflaged by their surroundings or they need to be looked at from a different angle or in a different light. But if you begin to think in terms of "making photographs," not taking snapshots and begin to look through what I



Focus On  
Photography

Monte Nagler

"square eyeballs," you'll be able to find many terrific photo opportunities.

Simple and apparently unimpressive things can often be the basis of a great shot. It could be a wall, a door, the texture of peeling paint or a rusted piece of farm equipment.

To find good photographs, constant awareness is required. You must learn to really "see" and be able to zero-in and isolate subjects from their surroundings.

Sometimes a picture is waiting to be taken but may not be

apparent from normal eye level. It may need a high or low viewpoint or require a different field of view given by a wide angle or telephoto lens to fit the composition in the frame.

So take time to evaluate the surroundings, look at them selectively. With practice, even the most ordinary places and objects can be made to yield impact-filled images that most people simply overlook.

One of the most picturesque stops on a recent photography workshop to Washington State was Lake Quinalt in Olympic National Park. Because it had rained the previous evening, the morning had that terrific "soft, smooth" light that I like so much with fog against the distant mountains. The scene had the makings of strong picture but something was missing. I noticed a boat pulled up on the beach and with the help of a couple of my students, we positioned it heading out into the water. All that was needed was my camera and wide angle lens to capture the photograph shown here.

Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer in Farmington Hills. Find him by fax at (248) 644-3134 or leave a message at (734) 953-2047.



Monte Nagler "found" this delightful scene in a recent photography workshop to Washington. It was taken at Quinalt in Olympic National Park.