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THE BILLINGS OUTPOST

Crichton stepping down from ACLU

Story and Photo
By ED KEMMICK
LastBestNews.com

MISSOULA — In a few months, Scott Crichton is going to be playing a lot more guitar.

Twenty-eight years after becoming the first full-time executive director of the Montana chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, he plans to leave his job in August.

That will give him more time for his music, taking him back to the beginning of his long career as an activist and organizer, when he sang labor songs, civil rights songs and songs of struggle. At 67,

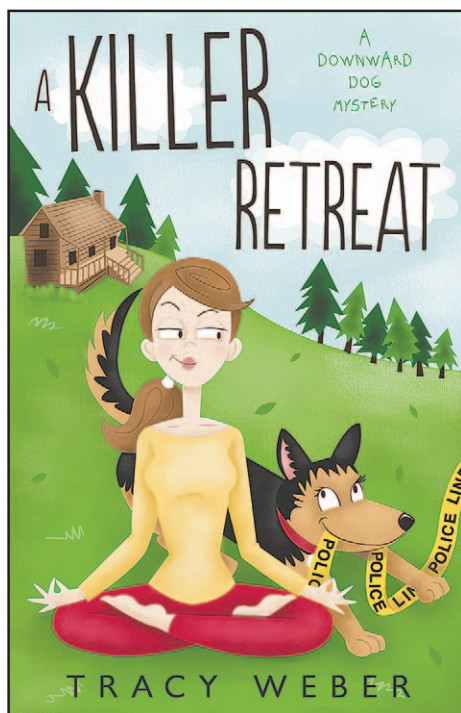
he figures he's earned some time off. "I'm not walking away because I've won all the fights," he said.

Far from it. Crichton is as apt to talk about his regrets — Montana still has the death penalty, still criminalizes marijuana possession — as he is to talk about the ACLU's accomplishments in Montana — voting rights reform, improved jail conditions and marriage equality.

His associates like to point out that Crichton, for all his passion about free speech and civil rights, is known for his willingness to work with anyone, to push



(Continued on Page 7) At age 67, Scott Crichton figures he's earned some time off.



'Killer' offers lots of fun

By STEPHEN DOW
For The Outpost

Reading Tracy Webber's new book "A Killer Retreat" is an experience similar to watching a summer popcorn flick: It's a lot of fun while you read it, but it isn't likely to linger in your memory long after you finish it.

This is not a putdown of Mrs. Webber's work by any means — I don't imagine she was trying to write the next classic of American literature when she started to compose this second novel in her "Downward Dog Mysteries" series. Instead, she was trying to create a novel that would lead to a few hours of entertainment — and as such "A Killer Retreat" succeeds spectacularly.

Picking up where her previous book, (Continued on Page 6)



Mystery writers Leslie Budewitz, left, and Tracy Webber discuss their newest books at Barnes and Noble.

Billings roots lead writers to mystery

Story and Photo
By STEPHEN DOW
For The Outpost

The careers of mystery writers Leslie Budewitz and Tracy Webber can be summed up in one word: community.

"Community comes into this conversation in two ways for me," said Budewitz. "The first is this: Every opportunity I have had as a writer has come to me through community and through my friends, family and fellow writers. The other aspect of community comes through in our novels. Tracy and I both write the lighter hearted side of the mystery world, which is sometimes called the

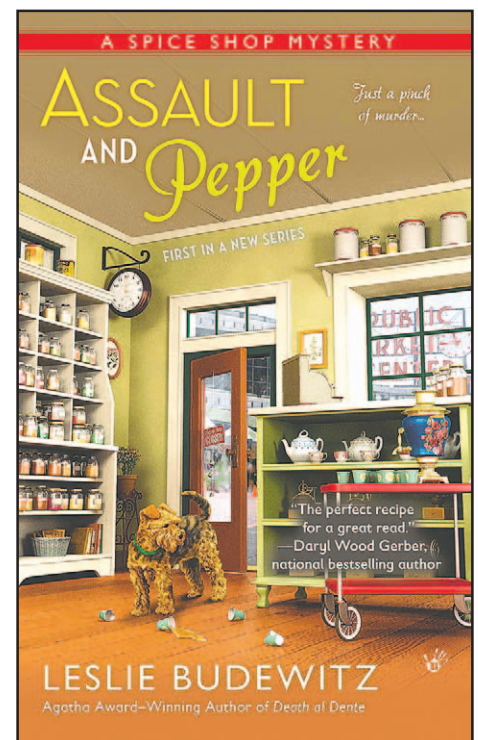
'cozy.' The key element of this kind of story is community."

Thus, it only made sense that the two Billings-born writers would return to their hometown last weekend to connect with their hometown fans and promote their newest novels at Barnes and Noble. Webber's newest novel, "A Killer Retreat," was published in January, while Budewitz's "Assault and Pepper" was released earlier this month.

Leslie Budewitz has always been an avid writer.

"I started writing at age four on my

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Little to fault in 'Assault'

By STEPHEN DOW
For the Outpost

Have you ever noticed that two chefs can use exactly the same ingredients, but prepare a meal in totally different ways? Leslie Budewitz's new novel, "Assault and Pepper," is kind of like that. The author utilizes many of the same ingredients as other mystery novels, but ends up creating something unique and surprisingly charming.

The novel follows Pepper Reece, an ex-law firm employee, who runs the Spice Shop (which sells various spice mixes and teas) in Seattle's Pike Place market. However, Pepper's blissful existence is threatened when a homeless man is found to

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