

AROUND TOWN

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Authors C.J. Box, an honoree, and Mara Purl had some time to catch up during the Friends of the Pikes Peak Library District Literary Awards Luncheon.



Corky Rogers, right, sister of Manitou Springs artist Charles Rockey, visits with author C.J. Box during an autograph session.



PHOTOS BY LINDA NAVARRO, THE GAZETTE
Theodora "Dora" Gonzales, president, Friends of the Pikes Peak Library District, and husband Albert at the Literary Awards Luncheon.

Writer C.J. Box draws a crowd at luncheon

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The book lovers saddled up for lunch with author **C.J. Box** and his Joe Pickett Western mysteries, and hilarity ensued. Friends of the Pikes Peak Library District had such fun at their April 29 Literary Awards Luncheon that a more sedate gathering in the next room — the ballroom at The Antlers — couldn't hear their speaker ... and asked Box to speak at one of their next events.

The 25th annual local literary awards event broke records, selling out all 250 seats and turning away many other Pickett fans, even some from out of state. Box, from Wyoming, is a multiple-

award-winning author with 22 novels to his credit, 17 of them about game warden Pickett. He was so popular his books were selling out at the autograph table and Friends hostess **Linda DuVal** had to delicately find a way to wrap up everything so he could head back to Cheyenne before a snowstorm.

Box shared his love affair with his hometown library. Sure, he was a regular kid hunting and fishing and being outdoors, but he has always loved to read. He'd ride his bike to the town library and claim his spot at a little table in back. Sometimes he'd look at the shelves to find "B" and the spot where his books might be someday.

Because he wrote Westerns and "had no interest in writing about lighthouses in Maine," he was "a 20-year overnight success," Box said, laughing.

Joe Pickett is extremely popular with male readers and

many were in the audience. Box chuckled, sharing a memory. After speaking to a group of Idaho librarians, he had asked if they were enthusiastic about so many boys reading, checking out his adventures. Unanimously positive, except for the librarian with the icy glare. She retorted, "NO." Not "those books about a gay Mormon."

An astonished Box could only sputter, "GAME WARDEN!"

Also honored at the luncheon was Manitou Springs legend **Charles Rockey**, winner of the Golden Quill for "Love Songs from Middle Times Echoed through Illuminations and Fables." Rockey's sister, daughter, other relatives and **David Ball**, who had saved the book from the Manitou flood, were there for the award presentation.

More about the event: tinyurl.com/lwaetrq.

More photos: gazette.com/life/around-town



A bust of Golden Quill winner Charles Rockey was represented by daughter Hannah Rockey and board member Jim Ciletti.



Former newspaperman Stephen Adams, right, with wife Mary Jane at the awards luncheon.



Board members, from left, Ali LaForce, Patty Froehle and Linda DuVal at the Friends of the Pikes Peak Library District Literary Awards Luncheon.