OUT & ABOUT

By Gayle VanVooren, Mascot Editor

To say that I enjoyed the Minnesota Crime Wave coming to town last week would be putting it mildly.
I didn't really know what to expect and went because "it was part of my job" to cover this event. Instead, it was a real treat to be there.
In many events of this sort, an author will dig out one of his or her favorite books and read from it.
While this is entertaining, I always feel a little cheated for I can certainly read the book, myself. It's much more fun to hear the author's ideas and stories.
William Krueger, Carl Brookins and Ellen Hart were here to promote their own books, but they did it in such a way that you wanted to purchase books without knowing much about the content.

Instead of reading to us, they let us look into their lives, just a little bit, to see how they work, what they like best, and how they develop their writing styles.
As a writer who still has a lot to learn, I found this fascinating. While the trio have become good friends, and have their love of a solid mystery as their baseline, they are completely different in their styles and processes.
Perhaps that is what keeps them traveling the road together - their "agreeing to disagree" philosophies.
All three are award-winners with their works, and they were willing to share the stage with their counterparts, in sharing their life's work.
One thing that was not talked about clearly was the royalties they make from their work. They

have a clear contract with their publisher, and make money “up front”, but the commission on each book sold is not known.
One clue they gave was their very reason for this traveling “crimewave” around the country. If they want to sell
books, it is up to them.
Publishers print the books and put them in many bookstores, but it is up to the author to really get out there and “sell” their books and themselves.
With many of us, finding a good story is like finding a treasure. And if there are more stories by the same author, you will go back and get the next book.
The books I selected from these three authors are now calling to me at my home. I just know I’m going to be thrust into the middle of a crime scene I simply can’t figure out. I can’t wait to open the pages and dig in.
There is nothing like reading a good story. As the characters and situations come to life, you can be drawn in to feel a part of the whole scene.
I would liken it to a really good vacation — except there is very little money spent. Only an opening of the mind and senses to the possibilities.
And it’s all waiting for me thanks to the Minnesota Crime Wave!