

## The Morristown Festival of Books is Back

By Henry M. Holden

The Morristown Festival of Books is an annual two-day event that takes place this year on October 11 and 12. According to Rachel Barry, Director of the Morristown Festival of Books, "The 6-year-old event is modeled after successful book festivals in other communities throughout the world. Each autumn, the festival brings together authors with readers and book lovers. The Festival is New Jersey's premier book festival, celebrating the written word's power to challenge, transport and transform."

Barry says the festival is growing each year. "We started with about 1,500 visitors six years ago and last year we hosted over 8,000."

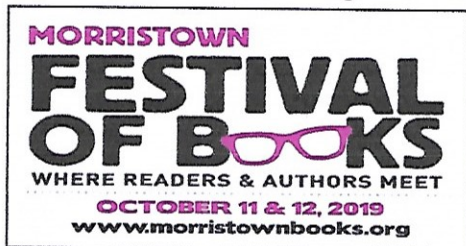
The opening night is a ticketed Keynote Event featuring Preet Bharara who served as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York from 2009 to 2017. In 2017, Bharara joined the NYU School of Law faculty as a Distinguished Scholar in Residence. Bharara will speak on Friday evening at the Mayo Performing Arts Center at 7:30pm.

Tickets will be available through the MPAC box office and on the festival website. Tickets are also available at the door on the night of the event, as availability allows.

The Main Festival takes place all day on Saturday (10 a.m. – 5 p.m.), rain or shine.

This year's festival features more than 50 authors. Author selections featuring various genres are designed to appeal to a variety of ages and reading interests.

"Authors will be speaking and answering questions in informal one-hour indoor sessions at five festival venues throughout the day," said Barry. "Immediately following



his or her talk, you will have the opportunity to speak with your favorite authors and have your books personalized at the Author Signing Tent, on the Vail Mansion lawn." These sessions are free, no tickets required; general seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. There will also be portable restrooms at the Vail Mansion lawn.

"The Festival center is on the lawn in front of the historic Vail Mansion (110 South Street), where there is an Information Tent, a Book Tent selling copies of the visiting authors' books, the Signing Tent where authors will greet visitors and sign books, and concession stands selling refreshments."

"This year's closing event is an exciting interactive event called Pitchapalooza," said Barry. "It's like American Idol for books (only without Simon). Anyone with an idea for a book has the chance to pitch it to a panel of judges. But they get only one minute."

The hosts, Arielle Eckstut and David Henry Sterry (a.k.a. The Book Doctors) team up with guest industry insiders

to form the judging panel. The Judges critique everything from idea to style to potential in the marketplace and much more. Whether potential authors pitch themselves, or simply listen to trained professionals critique each presentation, Pitchapaloozas are educational and entertaining for all. All attendees come away with concrete advice on how to improve their pitch as well as a greater understanding of the ins and outs of the publishing industry.

At the end of each Pitchapalooza, the judges come together to pick a winner. That winner receives an introduction by Eckstut and Sterry to an agent or publisher who is appropriate for their work. The Festival audience will also have a chance to pick a winning pitch. That Audience Choice winner will be voted on by the audience and will receive a 30-minute phone consultation from Eckstut and Sterry (a \$150 value).

KidFest @ MFOB includes author talks, signings, and fun activities all day for children up to 12 years old. Additionally, concessions will be available in the KidFest outdoor area outside the Presbyterian Church Parish House at 65 South Street.

Please note, the festival is not held on the Morristown Green. There are several public parking garages within walking distance of the Festival center. This is a casual event. Wear comfortable walking shoes and be prepared for cool weather. It is a rain or shine event, so please bring an umbrella if the day's weather warrants it.

For more information and a list of authors attending see: [www.morristownbooks.org](http://www.morristownbooks.org)