

## Top 10 places to have fun when it's too hot outside in the desert

Bruce Fessier, *The Desert Sun*

### Best lecture series: Rancho Mirage Writers Festival Series, Rancho Mirage library

The Art Museum also is offering a new Summer Lab, or S/LAB, at its Architecture and Design Center to engage the community in workshops and design exercises related to the new park being planned across from the museum, which should be interesting.



Author Don Winslow speaks as part of the Rancho Mirage Writers Festival series Thursday at the Rancho Mirage Public Library. (Photo: Bruce Fessier/The Desert Sun)

But the best talks are at the Rancho Mirage Writers Festival Series. I attended one Thursday by best-selling author Don Winslow, who has a home in Julian. He not only just released the critically acclaimed novel, *The Force*, but he took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* last week criticizing President Trump for wanting to “drag us back into one of the most catastrophic social policies in this nation’s history: The war on drugs.”

Winslow started talking about the value of libraries, but the audience soon steered his Q&A to the drug crisis.

[VIDEO: Winslow talk in Rancho Mirage](#)

Winslow said our government’s war on drugs has really been a 100-year battle (heroin possession only became illegal in 1924 after the Bayer company introduced it in 1898). He said we spend roughly \$88 billion a year to fight drugs, counting the cost of interdicting drugs, arresting drug users and dealers, sending them through the courts and keeping 2.2 million Americans in prison for drug violations.

His solution: “I would legalize or decriminalize all drugs yesterday. It doesn’t do any good to just do marijuana. We need to treat this as the social health problem is, not a law enforcement problem and, God help us, not a military problem.”

The next speaker on the series is Craig Johnson, the best-selling author of 12 Walt Longmire novels, which are the basis for “Longmire,” the hit Netflix original drama, Sept. 6 at the library. Information: [Rmwritersfest.org](http://Rmwritersfest.org) or (760) 341-7323.