



Meet

Silas House

Author of

"Southernmost"

House's fiction is known for its attention to the natural world, working class characters, and the plight of the rural place and rural people.

Saturday With Friends

June 30 @ 3 p.m.

Washington County Public Library
Conference Room
Abingdon, Virginia

Reception/Book Sale & Signing
follow

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Writers' Day held at Virginia Highlands Festival

Adriana Trigiani and Rita Quillen, as well as actor/songwriter Eugene Wolf conduct workshops on Writers' Day at the Virginia Highlands Festival. Young adult novelist R. J. Harris, children's author Joan Donaldson and historian Kathy Shearer join them. The event is Friday, July 27, beginning with registration from 8-9 a.m., then continuing throughout the day, culminating in "An Evening of Words and Music."

Trigiani begins the day's events at 9 a.m., with a workshop that gives attendees an overview of the writing life, practical steps to create a sacred space to work and tips for the daily care and feeding of their imagination. Trigiani has become much beloved around the world for her novels including the "Big Stone Gap" and the "Valentine" trilogies, "The Shoemaker's Wife," "Lucia, Lucia," "All the Stars in the Heavens" and the recent "Kiss Carlo."

Quillen is one of the region's finest poets. Her new volume, "The Mad Farmer's Wife," is a response to a life lived on a mountain cattle farm in Southwest Virginia and also to a poetic persona created by noted Kentucky poet and essayist Wendell Berry: the Mad Farmer. One of Quillen's workshops focuses on using two poetic forms: the ghazal and the pantoum, as a stimulus to branch out in your writing. She says, "Moving out into unfamiliar forms is often just the stimulus the writer needs to come up with new poems, even if they wind up abandoning the form." Her second workshop is a "lightning round" of writing prompts to generate some ideas that writers can develop later into poems, stories or essays. The benefits to the writer of pursuing both prose and poetry will be discussed.

Harris has developed a trilogy of young adult novels, the "Native Guardian" series, based on the Appalachian Mountain landscape, along with the legends, myths and folklore of the area. One of her workshops is on how to use one's family past to inspire stories. She says that she will instruct participants on "how different types of history (including family genealogy, local history, folklore, legends and superstitions) can flow through your writing to create complicated characters, unique settings and haunting plot lines that not only appeal to readers but also showcase who you are and where you come from." Her other workshop discusses how the use of point of view, verb tenses and word choice can help control character.

Donaldson is the author of two picture books, two young adult novels, and a collection of essays. "On Viney's

Mountain" won the 2010 Friends of American Writers Award and represented the State of Tennessee at the 2010 National Book Festival. One of her workshops is on how authors create compelling stories. She and participants explore elements of craft as displayed by various children's authors and consider how these writers shaped their stories. Her second workshop is on creative non-fiction, examining how storytelling techniques can be employed by nonfiction writers to fashion essays with drama and meaning.

Wolf is an actor/singer/storyteller who performed for many years with Johnson City's Road Company Theater and is a 20-year member of Barter Theatre's acting company. He is probably best known for his signature role as A. P. Carter in "Keep on The Sunny Side." He conducts a workshop on "How do you shape your stories and songs into a cohesive work of art?" This year Wolf has been touring an autobiographical play "The Book of Mamaw," a hilarious one-man show of songs and stories about his formative years living with his grandparents, especially the influence of his life of what he calls his "Church of Christ Mamaw." He will talk about the

power of using "the dirt you come from to make a satisfying mudpie that can feed the multitudes."

The final workshop is "The Business of Independence: Are You Ready to Self-Publish?" led by Kathy Shearer, along with Rita Quillen, Rebekah Harris and Joan Donaldson. Whether writers want to publish and sell locally or distribute across multiple markets — or if you're trying to decide if self-publishing is the right path for you — learn how to get your project from your computer to your target audience. Shearer has published four books of Southwest Virginia oral history, plus a few books for other people, handling all the facets of the production from the writing to the marketing, and she is eager to share her methods with aspiring self-publishers.

Participants can preregister online and select the workshops of their choice, at vahighlandsfestival.org. The registration fee is \$40, but high school, college or university students may attend for free.

For more information, contact the chair of the event Deborah Prescott at 276-466-4002. *AM*



Eugene Wolf



Joan Donaldson

Words & Music follows Writers' Day

As the culminating event of Writers' Day, "An Evening of Words & Music" features the locally popular Wolf Hills Jazz Quartet and Writers' Day authors: Rita Quillen, R. J. Harris, Joan Donaldson and Eugene Wolf. The band provides jazz interludes for readings and performances by the authors throughout their set.

The event takes place at Heartwood on the campus of Virginia Highlands Community College at 7 p.m. Admission is \$10, but attendees at Writers' Day are admitted free of charge.

Heartwood's brew bar bites, treats and beverages are available for purchase throughout the event. The Wolf Hills Jazz Quartet consists of Ed Davis on bass, Ernie Braganza on guitar, Joe Pendergast on drums and Tom Peterson on saxophone. *AM*