

Speaker Bios



Andy Duncan

Andy Duncan is a science fiction and fantasy writer, currently an associate professor of English at Frostburg State University in Maryland. He has won a Nebula Award and three World Fantasy Awards, the most recent in 2014

for his Tor.com novella “Wakulla Springs,” co-written with Ellen Klages. He writes weird fiction inspired by history, folklore and oral storytelling, especially of the South and of Appalachia in all their diversity. His third collection, *An Angel of Utopia: New and Selected Stories*, is upcoming from Small Beer Press.



Jesse Graves

Jesse Graves, a Tennessee native and an associate professor at East Tennessee State University, has two acclaimed volumes of poetry. *Tennessee Landscape with Blighted Pine* (2012) won the Weatherford Prize from the Appalachian Studies

Association. *Basin Ghosts* (2014) received the James Still Award for writing about the American South from the Fellowship of Southern Writers. Graves has a BA and PhD from the University of Tennessee and an MFA in Poetry from Cornell University.



John Hardy

John Hardy has been involved with theatre for over thirty years—as an actor, director, playwright, teacher and dramaturge—most of that time at the Barter Theatre, where he is currently an Associate Artist.

Over the course of his career he has directed over one hundred productions at theatres around the country and as a playwright has had professional productions of fifteen plays. Hardy has an MFA from the University of Alabama and a PhD from Texas Tech University.



Linda Hoagland

Linda Hudson Hoagland has won acclaim for her ten mystery novels, which include the recent *Snooping Can Be Dangerous* and *The Best Darn Secret*. She is also the author of six works of nonfiction, a collection of short writings,

along with a volume of poems. Hoagland has won numerous awards for her work, including first place in the Sherwood Anderson Short Story Contest. She is currently the president of Appalachian Authors Guild which has a membership of over 60 members and meets in Abingdon every month.



Christopher Scotton

Christopher Scotton, a native of northern Virginia, is the author of the acclaimed Appalachian novel, *The Secret Wisdom of the Earth* (2015), which earned him a first-run print order of 100,000 copies for that first novel. The book is a

coming-of age story as well as a murder mystery set in eastern Kentucky coalfields in the 1980s and is being compared to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Scotton was the successful CEO of a software company when the writing bug bit him when he was in his 40s.



Joe Tennis

Joe Tennis is the author of the recently released *Virginia Rail Trails: Crossing the Commonwealth*, a statewide history and guide to trails that were all once railroads in Virginia.

Tennis has won numerous awards as a features writer and columnist for the Bristol Herald Courier and has been a longtime contributor of travel essays to Blue Ridge Country magazine. Tennis has released seven other regional history books, including *Haunts of Virginia's Blue Ridge Highlands* and *Washington County, Virginia: Then & Now*.

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VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS festival 2015

Writers' Day

Writers, it's your day. Don't miss it!

Join us as we cover a diversity of genres, including poetry, fantasy, dramaturgy, and fiction. We'll also have a panel on getting published and an extra special event at Heartwood blending the spoken word and musical accompaniment.

FRIDAY, JULY 31, 2015

8 am-5 pm
Virginia Highlands Community College
Keyser-Aday Theater

Registration Fee: \$30
(\$20 with student ID)

Registration includes a ticket
to “Words and Music” Event
at Heartwood on July 31st at 7 pm.

EVENT SCHEDULE

8-9 am	Registration
9-10 am	Introduction of Speakers
10-11:30 am	Workshops
11:30-NOON	Book Sales and Signings
NOON-1 pm	Lunch
1:15-2:45 pm	Workshops
3-4:30 pm	Workshops
7-9 pm	“Words and Music”

**More information and to pre-register:
VaHighlandsFestival.org**

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS
festival

P.O. Box 801, Abingdon, VA 24212

July 31-August 9, 2015

(Antiques Market: August 1-9)



Schedule of Workshops

10-11:30 am

Where Do You Get Your Ideas? Research!

with Andy Duncan

Not only journalists, historians and biographers benefit from research; fiction writers, poets, playwrights and screenwriters do as well. Science-fiction writers have to know their science, historical-romance writers their history, crime writers their way around a police investigation or a courtroom procedure. This workshop focuses on practical ways to derive inspiration from the world of facts. All participants will leave with at least one new idea!

Home-places, Gifts, and Other Voices

with Jesse Graves

This workshop offers a number of prompts and sample poems that have succeeded in inspiring many writers to explore their own personal subject matter. Ideas offered here will help students learn and practice the techniques, habits, and discipline of writing literary poems. Writers will leave this session with new material, and some thoughts and suggestions on how to revise those ideas into finished poems.

How I Ran Out of Excuses and Started Writing

with Christopher Scotton

Scotton spent much of his adult life manufacturing excuses not to write. Then finally, at age 38 he had an epiphany and began writing *The Secret Wisdom of the Earth*. While holding down a full-time job and raising two young boys, he rose every day at 5 am to write in the quiet of the morning. This workshop will focus on the discipline and process of writing as well as tips from Scotton on finding an agent and getting a publishing deal.

1:15-2:45 pm

A World of Your Own: Science Fiction and Fantasy Settings

with Andy Duncan

Settings are vital elements in all fiction, but especially in science fiction and fantasy, where writers aren't limited to Earth as we know it, and where readers yearn to explore richly imagined alternatives, from Wonderland to Westeros, from the alien star ship Rama to the interstellar Radch empire. Using a variety of SF/fantasy artworks for inspiration, participants in this workshop will leave with new worlds to explore!

Playwriting Methodology

with John Hardy

Hardy will discuss basics of playwriting philosophy. The beginnings of formulating a play will be outlined and the methods used in generating a dramatic text from beginning to end will be outlined and discussed. Participants should bring notebook and pencil in order to participate in the stages of the methodology. Printed materials will be available for the participants to take home.

Writing Characters That Root into a Reader's Soul

with Christopher Scotton

Character development isn't just an important element of great story telling; it's the most important—more critical than plot! However, many aspiring writers fail to craft compelling, multi-dimensional characters who stick with readers long after the last page is turned. This workshop will focus on the nuts and bolts of creating characters that leap off the page, grab readers by their earlobes and burrow into their hearts. Afterwards, you'll be armed with a toolbox of techniques and ideas to make your characters come alive.

3-4:30 pm

Collaboration and Productivity in Writing and Editing

with Jesse Graves

This session will offer advice for writers looking to gain the most productivity out of their writing time, and who wish to help build a community around the solitary practice of writing. Graves will share his own experience of working on editing volumes of The Southern Poetry Anthology series, writing critical essays, forming a productive writers' group, and co-writing a long poem in sequence. This session will include time for questions from the audience, and a discussion of how to organize one's life around literary work.

Playwriting Methodology Applied: The Monologue

with John Hardy

Attendees at this workshop may participate or observe. Participants will be asked to follow along, step by step, writing their own monologues, as Hardy demonstrates the methods he used to generate a monologue written just for the occasion of this workshop. Participants should bring a notebook and pencil.

A Panel of Writers--How To Get Published: Some Practical Tips

with Christopher Scotton, Joe Tennis

Linda Hoagland

Today publishing comes in a variety of forms, from e-publishing to traditional book publishing. This panel discussion will give aspiring writers tips on getting published. Included on the panel will be Christopher Scotton, who got a contract from a national publisher for his first book; local author Joe Tennis who has published a variety of history, travel and outdoor books; and southwest Virginia writer Linda Hoagland, who has published 18 books, including novels, short sketches and a volume of poetry.

Related Event



"An Evening of Words and Music"

7 pm • Heartwood • \$10

(All paid participants in the Writers' Day will be admitted FREE of additional charge.)

As a culmination of Writers' Day events there will be a showcasing of readings by participants Andy Duncan, Jesse Graves, John Hardy, and Christopher Scotton, accompanied by music from Wyatt Rice and Claiborne Woodall. Rice is a member of the Tony Rice Unit and a master of the new acoustic style of flatpicked guitar. He has frequently performed on the Grand Ole Opry and with numerous artists including Alison Krauss, Ricky Skaggs and the Lonesome River Band. Woodall has placed highly in several guitar competitions and performed with numerous acoustic groups throughout the region.

Student Scholarships

Scholarships for Writers' Day are available to full-time students in the junior and senior years of high school and in all levels of college and university.

Students who present a letter of recommendation from their teacher on official school stationery at the registration desk will be admitted free of charge. One teacher may recommend up to two students. Recommended students need not preregister.

Scholarships are funded by the Poetry Society of Virginia, and each recipient is expected to attend at least one poetry workshop, the other two workshop options being open to the student's choice.