



Virginia Highlands Festival  
335 Cummings Street  
Abingdon, VA 24210

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High-resolution photos may be downloaded from the  
website or requested via email

NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS FESTIVAL PRESENTS  
WRITER'S DAY  
FESTIVAL DATES: FRIDAY, JULY 28-SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2017**

ABINGDON, VA/July 10, 2017– Leap into your own creative writing adventure at the 69th annual Virginia Highlands Festival on Friday, July 28, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m in the Keyser Aday Theatre located in the LRC Building, Virginia Highlands Community College. Whether you are a seasoned author or a new writer looking for creative inspiration, we have a special day designed for the wordsmith in you!

“Everyone has a story inside of them,” said Festival executive director Becky Caldwell. “Our job is to help you get it out and onto the page.”

This year’s Writers’ Day features four established authors to guide you through the creative process—Mark Powell, Jim Minick, Thorpe Moeckel, and John Hardy—and culminates in “An Evening of Words & Music” featuring musicians Wyatt Rice and Claiborne Woodall.

Participants can pre-register online and select the workshops of their choice at our Festival site [www.vahighlandsfestival.org/tickets](http://www.vahighlandsfestival.org/tickets). Registration fee is \$30 and available both in advance and at the event, but high school, college, or university students may attend for free.

For more information, contact one of the co-chairs of the event: Deborah Prescott at (276) 466-4002 or Steve Lindeman (276) 944-0907.

Ron Rash describes novelist **Mark Powell** as the “best Appalachian novelist of his generation.” Powell is the author of five novels including *Small Treasons* recently published in June 2017 from Simon & Schuster. He holds degrees from Yale Divinity School, the University of South Carolina, and the Citadel. He lives in Boone, North Carolina where he teaches at Appalachian State University. He will be conducting a workshop on how writers discover the emotional center in their work and one that examines how dialogue, particularly in tense situations, can drive fiction in a way exposition cannot.

**Jim Minick**, the nationally recognized memoirist of *The Blueberry Years* has published a new novel, *Fire Is Your Water*. He has taught at Radford University and currently teaches at Augusta University. He will be leading a workshop on using family stories to make art and one about finding a voice in writing stories, both your voice and that of your characters.

A teacher of poetry at Hollins University, **Thorpe Moeckel**, will conduct a workshop on food and drink in poetry—using food’s many sensory and cultural energies to channel the varieties of human hunger. The other workshop will explore the potential of using second-person point of view, both “the hazards and heavens of the technique” as he describes it.

Finally, **John Hardy**, who has been associated with Barter Theatre over four decades, will lead two workshops on playwriting. The first workshop will discuss methods used in creating a drama. The second one will demonstrate methods used to generate a monologue, step by step. Hardy has directed over 120 professional productions and has performed some of the great theatre roles: Hamlet, Macbeth, and Tom Wingfield from “The Glass Menagerie.”

**More about “Words & Music”:** Rice and Woodall frequently play as a guitar duo together throughout the region. Wyatt Rice is a member of the Tony Rice Unit and a master of the new acoustic style of flat-picked guitar. He has frequently performed on the Grand Ole Opry and with numerous artists including Alison Kraus, Ricky Skaggs, and the Lonesome River Band. Claiborne Woodall has placed highly in several guitar competitions and performed with numerous acoustic groups throughout the region.

### **Download our Brochure**

Why wait? Grab on to this last bit of summer vacation! Take the stress out of planning your trip to the Festival by visiting [www.vahighlandsfestival.org](http://www.vahighlandsfestival.org) to access the Festival’s full schedule and online ticket sales.

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**About the Virginia Highlands Festival:** Founded in 1948, the Virginia Highlands Festival is an annual, ten-day event devoted to the celebration of Southwest Virginian heritage and rich Appalachian tradition. Held in historic Abingdon, Virginia, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Festival attracts thousands of visitors each year. The Festival was selected as the “Best Art Event” by the readers of *Virginia Living* magazine in 2017 (sixth year in a row), recognized as a Top 20 Event by the Southeastern Tourism Society and has been consistently named as one of the American Bus Association’s Top 100 Tourist Attractions over the past four decades. In 2017, the 69<sup>th</sup> Virginia Highlands Festival will run from July 28-August 6 (Antiques Market July 29- August 6) and feature live concerts, a juried arts and crafts show, and an antique market, as well as workshops, lectures and tours. To learn more about the Virginia Highlands Festival and this year’s events, please visit <http://www.vahighlandsfestival.org/>

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