



Photo by Jackson Stahl - Staff Photographer

The Naked Author Jam featured 12 Asheville authors answering questions and talking about their writing experience.

## Local novelists collaborate for novel featuring the Asheville area

### *Twelve authors combine efforts for local store*

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Twelve Western North Carolina authors commemorated 30 years of Malaprop's Bookstore with the collaborative creation of the wildly funny murder mystery novel, *Naked Came the Leaf Peeper*.

"The book, being a representation of a number of authors from Western North Carolina, is the perfect way to celebrate Malaprop's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary because the story has built itself around supporting the community and its writers," said **Kevin Mann, a bookseller at Malaprop's Bookstore.**

The authors celebrated the bookstore's anniversary by reading passages from their chapters and signing books at the Naked Author Jam on Friday in UNC Asheville's Humanities Lecture Hall.

"I enjoyed the jam. It's always fun to get a bunch of writers together and see what happens," Mann said. "There were a lot of laughs. It's great to hear the work read out loud by those who have written it."

All the authors were enlisted by Brian Lee Knopp, author of one of Malaprop's bestselling novels, *Mayhem in Mayberry: Misadventures of a P.I. in Southern Appalachia*. His wife, Linda Barrett Knopp, is the general manager at Malaprop's Bookstore.

"I think people are drawn to Malaprop's because it is an independent bookstore and it's locally owned and a lot of people in Asheville want to support those two characteristics," said **Virginia McKinley, community outreach coordinator at Malaprop's.** "It's a welcoming place."

The authors were each given two weeks to write a chapter, picking up where the previous

authors left off. None of the authors were told who they would be collaborating with.

The first chapter was written by Brian Lee Knopp, followed by John P. McAfee, Susan Reinhardt, Vicki Lane, Tommy Hays, Wayne Caldwell, Fred Chappell, Alan Gratz, Annette Saunooke Clapsaddle, Gene Cheek, Linda Barrett Knopp and Tony Earley.

McKinley said all of the authors have ties to the area and to Malaprop's. They all currently live in the region or were originally from the area.

"We have a very strong regional section and historically Malaprop's and its owner have supported local and regional writers," McKinley said.

Malaprop's is an independent and locally owned bookstore which means that the inventory is directly influenced by the people who shop at the store, McKinley said.

"It's owned by people in this community who are not responsible to a large corporation that runs a chain store," McKinley said.

The Great Smokies Writing Program at UNCA co-sponsored the Naked Author Jam. The program's executive director is Hays, one of the authors of the novel.

The program provides aspiring writers with classes taught by regional authors with experience in teaching, McKinley said.

*Naked Came the Leaf Peeper* is one of many works by local authors the book store sells.

"The novel is definitely of interest to readers who live in or have visited Western North Carolina because the writers often directly allude to or mention various landmarks, towns and overlooks of the Blue Ridge Parkway," Mann said. "If you have been to these places it really helps you to see the story."



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**Annette Clapsaddle, one of the authors of *Naked Came the Leaf Peeper*, wrote chapter nine of the novel. The book is set in Western North Carolina, and features various well-known landmarks in the area. The book is available for sale at Malaprop's bookstore in downtown Asheville.**