

Looking Glass Rock Writers' Conference

Public invited to writers' readings at 4th annual literary workshop

Brevard College and the Transylvania County Library Foundation are once again serving as co-hosts and platinum sponsors for the Looking Glass Rock Writers' Conference, which opened last night on the Brevard College campus and will continue through Sunday.

Now in its fourth year, the conference explores the theme "A Sense of Place" as a small, select group of conference attendees from around the country work under the guidance of notable writers Robin Wall Kimmerer, Wiley Cash and Frank X Walker. Conference attendees competed for just one of 12 slots in each of the genres of nonfiction, fiction and poetry. Among those who earned a spot at this year's conference is BC student Alexis Henley.

In addition, the writers will give public presentations on Friday, May 10, and Saturday, May 11. Highland Books will be on hand both evenings with books for sale and signing.

Plant ecologist and award-winning author Kimmerer, who is leading the nonfiction group, will have her public reading and presentation today at 7:30 p.m. in Ingram Auditorium in Dunham Hall on the BC campus. There is no charge to attend, but seating is first come, first served. Doors will open at 7 p.m.

Dr. Kimmerer is a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, N.Y. She is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and serves as the founding director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, whose mission is to create programs which draw on the wisdom of both indigenous and scientific knowledge for our shared goals of sustainability. She is the author of numerous scientific papers on the ecology of mosses and restoration ecology and on the contributions of traditional ecological knowledge to our understanding of the natural world.

She is the author of "Gathering Moss," which incorporates both traditional indigenous knowledge and scientific perspectives and was awarded the prestigious John Burroughs Medal for Nature Writing in 2005. Her latest book, "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants," was released in 2013 and was awarded the Sigurd Olson Nature Writing Award.

She has served as writer in residence at the Andrews Experimental Forest, Blue Mountain



Wiley Cash



Robin Wall Kimmerer



Frank X Walker

Center, the Sitka Center and the Mesa Refuge. More information is available at <http://www.esf.edu/faculty/kimmerer/>.

Saturday's event begins at 7 p.m. and will feature authors Wiley Cash and Frank X Walker, who are leading the sessions on fiction and poetry, respectively. The readings and presentations will be held in the Rogow Room at the Transylvania County Library. There is no charge to attend, but seating is first come, first served.

Cash is the New York Times bestselling author of the novels "The Last Ballad," "A Land More Kind Than Home," and "This Dark Road to Mercy." The founder of the Open Canon Book Club and co-founder of the Land More Kind Appalachian Artists Residency, he has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, and the Weymouth Center. He serves as the writer in residence at the University of North Carolina-Asheville and teaches in the Mountainview

Low-Residency MFA program.

Cash lives in North Carolina with his wife and their two young daughters. More details are available at <http://www.wileycash.com>.

Walker is an African-American poet from Danville, Kentucky. Walker coined the word "Affrilachia," signifying the importance of the African-American presence in Appalachia: the "new word ... spoke to the union of Appalachian identity and the region's African-American culture and history." He is a professor in the English department at the University of Kentucky and was the Poet Laureate of Kentucky from 2013-2015. Complete details are available at his website, <http://www.frankxwalker.com/>.

For additional information or questions, visit <https://library.transylvaniacounty.org/lgrwc/> or contact the Transylvania County Library at (828) 884-3151.

Ensemble ends on a high note...

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Members of the Blue Ridge Symphonic Brass were accompanied by BC faculty member Vance Reese playing the \$1.2 million Kirkpatrick-Coleman Pipe Organ.

Following intermission, the group performed a contemporary arrangement titled "Gershwin Prelude Suite" written by Roussanova Lucas. As an ode to the famed composer and musician George Gershwin, the piece brought new life to his timeless works.

The group then performed Steven Reineke's "The Witch and the Saint" that is based upon a German folklore about twins Helena and

Sibylla. Ironically, the piece began with twin sisters Whitney Ward, on french horn, and Britney Ward, on euphonium, playing a solemn, Gregorian chant-like duet.

To end the night, the band played a familiar arrangement of John William's score titled "Music from Star Wars" by composer Robert W. Smith. During the opening movement, "The Imperial March," Dr. Kathy Gresham and Dr. David Gresham's son Jack, dressed as Darth Vader, initiated a theatrical lightsaber duel with band director Dr. Peterson. The audience surely enjoyed the performance accompanied by the ensemble's rendition of the popular soundtrack.