

## Meet the writers you have read

### Upcoming author appearances showcase WNC's wealth of stories

Rob Neufeld • March 14, 2010

Looking around Western North Carolina at author appearances and book publications, it's easy to say, "This is reading country!"

#### Jill McCorkle

Jill McCorkle comes to Western Carolina University on March 22 for the eighth annual Spring Literary Festival. McCorkle, a North Carolina writer, is one of the few most noted American authors of this era. She has been a leader in establishing masters programs in creative writing from Bennington and Harvard to N.C. State.

"The Cheerleader" and "July 7," McCorkle's debut novels in 1984, presented alternate versions of a North Carolina town beset by a murder in the 1970s. One was a dramatic character study, the other a social comedy.

McCorkle's new book, "Going Away Shoes: Stories," is a must-read, a delicious presentation of life going in all directions. It includes the story "Intervention," also included in "The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction." Visit [www.litfestival.org](http://www.litfestival.org).

#### Gary Carden

This region has been reading country for a long time, as evidenced by inheritor of mountain

storytelling traditions, Gary Carden. A candidate for a National Heritage Award, Carden, I feel, combines in his many diverse productions a Sylva upbringing, a quare talent, American pop culture, Cherokee familiarity and a lifelong study of world literature and mythology.

Carden takes the stage at 6 p.m., March 27 at Malaprop's Bookstore/Café along with Neal Hutcheson, the filmmaker who produced Carden's one-actor plays "The Outlaw, Redmond" and "The Prince of Dark Corners." The author and director will reveal how literature treats a moonshiner.

Acclaimed actress Elizabeth Westall takes the stage at 7 p.m. Friday in Coulter Hall at Western Carolina University for a production of Carden's play "Nance Dude," in which a desperate granny reflects on her controversial life.

The events are fundraisers for the new Jackson County Library. Call 507-0476.


#### Civil War thriller

New England literary star Howard Frank Mosher comes to Malaprop's Bookstore at 7 p.m. Saturday because Morgan Kinneson, the hero of Mosher's new novel, "Walking to Gatlinburg," experiences an astounding Civil War odyssey that leads to the Great Smoky Mountains.

Morgan's Vermont mountain upbringing partly resembles a Western North Carolinian's. The 17-year-old's family is split between abolitionists and anti-abolitionists and between liberal and fundamentalist interpretations of the Bible.

"Did Lord Jesus of Nazareth sit around the

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woodstove cracking wise with his cronies?" Morgan's aunt chides him. Morgan is an avid reader of natural history and adventure, and when his brother, a Union doctor, goes MIA, Morgan sets out to find him, carrying a rune stone he'd rescued from a murdered fugitive slave.

The legendary aspect of every encounter is half the fun. At the end of Morgan's trek, he meets a Great Smokies mountain woman named Barbary Allen, who picks up her gourd fiddle and makes up songs on the spot, including one she calls, "The Ballad of the Outlaw, Childe Morgan."

Rob Neufeld is the author and editor of four books, and hosts the Web site, "The Read on WNC." Contact him at [RNeufeld@charter.net](mailto:RNeufeld@charter.net) and 505-1973.

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