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Literary Festival promises talented wordsmiths at WCU

Western Carolina University's Spring Literary Festival rings in a decade this year with two authors whose works have been tagged for the silver screen.

The festival will open the evening of Sunday, March 18, and run through Thursday, March 22. All events are in Hinds University Center or the Coulter Building recital hall. Events are free and open to the public, and authors will sign works after each reading.

Novelist, poet and short story writer Ron Rash, WCU's Parris Distinguished Professor of Appalachian Culture, will participate in a question-and-answer session with audience members beginning at 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 20, in the University Center theater. Rob Neufeld, who writes about books and local history for the Asheville Citizen-Times, will emcee the session. A film adaptation of Rash's "Serena," a 2008 novel about the ambitious wife of a timber baron set in Depression-era Waynesville, is set for release in 2014. Rash's newest novel, "The Cove," will be published in April.

Nick Flynn will close the festival with a reading at 7:30 p.m. March 22 in the recital hall. Flynn's 2004 memoir recounts the author's encounter with his long-absent father while working in a Boston homeless shelter. The work was adapted and recently released as the feature film "Being Flynn," directed by Paul Weitz and starring Robert De Niro, Paul Dano and Julianne Moore. Flynn authored a second memoir, "The Ticking Is the Bomb," which was published in 2010, and a companion collection of poems in 2011.



Nick Flynn, above, and Ron Rash, below, are two of the many authors who will take part in this year's Spring Literary Festival at Western Carolina University. Rash's novel, "Serena," set in Haywood County, will soon be a motion picture.

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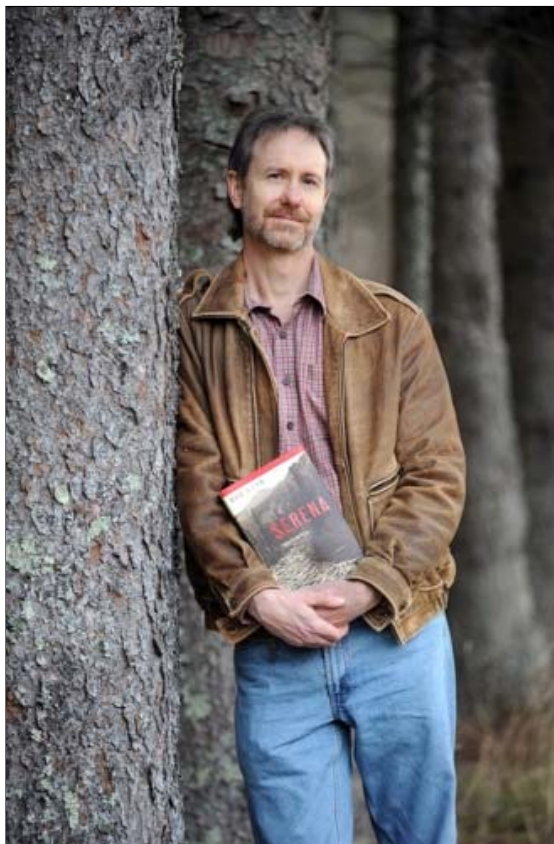
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This year's festival also includes a performance of "The Becky Show," a multimedia exploration of a "white trash childhood" by Rebecca Hardin-Thrift, at noon March 22 in Illusions in the University Center. Hardin-Thrift, originally from Belmont, writes short stories and poetry and is an associate professor of English at Tougaloo College in Jackson, Miss.

Other featured authors this year are Mary Adams, Catherine Carter and Deidre Elliott, all of WCU's Department of English; and Shirlette Ammons, Darnell Arnoult, Joseph Bathanti, Stefan Merrill Block, David Joy, Jon Pineda and Glenis Redmond.

WCU's Spring Literary Festival, directed this year by Pam Duncan of WCU's English department, has a long tradition of bringing established and emerging literary talent to Western North Carolina. Again this year, with the help of a \$6,000 Arts and Audiences grant from the N.C. Arts Council, festival organizers donated copies of works by featured authors to the public libraries in Sylva, Franklin, Bryson City and Highlands.

Literary festival sponsors include WCU's Visiting Writers Series; the Department of English; the Arts and Cultural Events Series; the Office of the Chancellor; the Office of the Provost; the Division of Student Affairs; and the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching. The project also received support from the N.C. Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

Visitors may park in any spaces not designated as special-use.

More information about the festival is available by calling 227-7264 or e-mailing info@litfestival.org. Visit the festival website at www.litfestival.org.

A complete schedule follows:

Sunday, March 18 – 7:30 p.m., poet Glenis Redmond (UC theater).

Monday, March 19 – Noon, Gilbert Chappell Distinguished Poetry Reading (student poets) featuring distinguished poet Joseph Bathanti (UC theater); 4 p.m., memoirist and poet Jon Pineda (UC theater); 7:30 p.m., novelist Stefan Merrill Block (UC theater).

Tuesday, March 20 – 4 p.m., poets Catherine Carter and Mary Adams (UC theater); 8 p.m., novelist Ron Rash in an exceed audience Q&A with Rob Neufeld of the Asheville Citizen-Times (UC theater).

Wednesday, March 21 – 4 p.m., fiction writer Darnell Arnoult (UC theater); 7:30 p.m., creative nonfiction writers Deidre Elliott and David Joy (UC theater).

Thursday, March 22 – Noon, Rebecca Hardin-Thrift's "The Becky Show" (UC Illusions); 4 p.m., poet Shirlette Ammons (recital hall, Coulter); 7:30 p.m., memoirist Nick Flynn (recital hall).

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