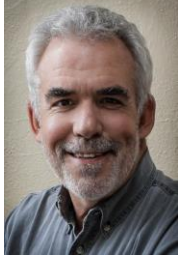


West Virginia Writers, Inc.

2020 Annual Writing Contest Judges' Bios

Short Poetry:



Rob Merritt a Professor of English at Bluefield College in Virginia, is the author of the poetry collections, *The Language of Longing*, *Landscape Architects*, and *Blue-Jade Mountains*. A member of the National Association for Poetry Therapy, he offers workshops on the healing power of expressive writing. He has taught poetry in China. Currently, he is writing about personal mythologies, the geographical imagination, and connections between Chinese and Appalachian poets.

Long Poetry:



Savannah Sipple is the author of *WWJD & Other Poems*, which explores what it is to be a queer woman in Appalachia and is rooted in its culture and in her body. A writer from eastern Kentucky, her writing has recently been published in *Southern Cultures*, *Split This Rock*, *Salon*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Waxwing*, and other places. Savannah is an Assistant Professor of English at Bluegrass Community and Technical College and a mentor in the low residency MFA program at West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Short Story:



Eliot Parker is the author of four works, most recently a short story collection titled *Snapshots*. His most recent novel, *A Knife's Edge*, is the sequel to the award-winning novel *Fragile Brilliance*. He is a recipient of the West Virginia Literary Merit Award and he recently received the Thriller Writing Award by the National Association of Book Editors (NABE) for his novels. A graduate of Eastern Kentucky University with his MFA in Creative Writing and Murray State University with his Doctorate in English, he teaches English at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi.

Nonfiction:



Cicero Fain is the author of *Black Huntington: An Appalachian Story*. Dr. Fain is a third generation Huntingtonian, although he currently lives in Maryland where he's a professor of History at the College of Southern Maryland. Prior to taking this position, he was an assistant professor of History at Marshall University.

Topic — LGBTQ:



Jeff Mann grew up in Covington, Virginia, and Hinton, West Virginia, receiving degrees in English and forestry from West Virginia University. His poetry, fiction, and essays have appeared in many publications. He has published three award-winning poetry chapbooks, three novellas, five novels, a book of poetry and memoir, and three volumes of short fiction. In 2013, he was inducted into the Saints and Sinners Literary Festival Hall of Fame. He teaches creative writing at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Emerging Writers Prose:



Originally from Mississippi, **Nick White** is the author of the novel *How to Survive a Summer* (Blue Rider/Penguin, 2017) and the story collection *Sweet and Low*. He is an Assistant Professor of English at The Ohio State University's MFA Program in Creative Writing. His short stories, poems, and essays have appeared in a variety of places, including *The Kenyon Review*, *Guernica*, *Catapult*, *The Hopkins Review*, *Indiana Review*, *The Literary Review*, *Lit Hub*, and elsewhere. He is currently at work on a new novel.

Emerging Writers Poetry:



Neil Carpathios is the author of five full-length poetry collections, most recently *Confessions of a Captured Angel* and *Far Out Factoids*. His sixth collection, *The Door on Every Tear*, is slated for release in 2020. In 2015 he edited the anthology, *Every River on Earth: Writing from Appalachian Ohio*. Currently, he is a professor of English and Creative Writing at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio.

Children's Books:



Sarah Sullivan is the author of picture books, novels and poetry. Her picture book, *Passing the Music Down*, was an N.C.T.E. Notable book, a nominee for the West Virginia Children's Choice Award and a Bank Street College Best Children's Book. Her novel, *All That's Missing*, received a starred review from the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*. Her poetry has been anthologized and has appeared in *Cricket* magazine and other publications. Sarah holds an MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults from Vermont College where she was awarded a Harcourt Post-Graduate Scholarship. She lives with her husband in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Social Change:



Crystal Wilkinson is the award-winning author of *The Birds of Opulence* (winner of the 2016 Ernest J. Gaines Prize for Literary Excellence), *Water Street and Blackberries*, *Blackberries*. Nominated for both the Orange Prize and the Pushcart Prize and her short stories, poems and essays have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. She currently teaches at the University of Kentucky where she is Associate Professor of English in the MFA in Creative Writing Program.

Screenplay:



Jeremy F. Richter is an award-winning, Los Angeles-based playwright/composer currently working on two new musicals – one about family and craft beer, the other a semi-autobiographical cabaret called “It’s Good to be Dad.” He is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America.

Book Length Prose



Lee Martin is the author of the novels, *The Bright Forever*, a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction; *River of Heaven*; *Quakertown*; *Break the Skin*; and *Late One Night*. He has also published three memoirs in addition to a craft book on writing. His fiction and nonfiction have appeared in many prestigious literary journals and magazines. He teaches in the MFA Program at The Ohio State University, where he is a College of Arts & Sciences Distinguished Professor.

Middle Grade Books/Young Adult Books:



Aaron Starmer was born in northern California and raised in the suburbs of Syracuse, New York. His middle grade and young adult novels have been translated into multiple foreign languages and have appeared on Best of the Year lists from *Time Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, New York Public Library, YALSA, Bank Street College of Education, Chicago Public Library and School Library Journal. His latest novel, *Spontaneous*, is in development as a film. He lives in Vermont with his wife and two daughters.

Speculative Fiction (Sci-fi, Fantasy, Horror, Paranormal)



Lucy Snyder is the Shirley Jackson Award-nominated and five-time Bram Stoker Award-winning author of over 100 published short stories and a dozen books. Her most recent books are the collection *Garden of Eldritch Delights* and the forthcoming novel *The Girl With the Star-Stained Soul*. She also wrote the novels *Spellbent*, *Shotgun Sorceress*, and *Switchblade Goddess*, the nonfiction book *Shooting Yourself in the Head for Fun and Profit: A Writer’s Survival Guide*, and the collections *While the Black Stars Burn*, *Soft Apocalypses*, *Orchid Carousals*, *Sparks and Shadows*,

Chimeric Machines, and *Installing Linux on a Dead Badger*. She lives in Columbus, Ohio and is on the faculty in Seton Hill University’s MFA program in Writing Popular Fiction.

New Mountain Voices, Grades K-5:



Laura Treacy Bentley is a novelist, poet, and amateur photographer from Huntington, West Virginia. She is the author of a recent poetry artbook, *Looking for Ireland: An Irish Appalachian Pilgrimage*, a literary thriller set in Ireland, *The Silver Tattoo*, a short story prequel, *Night Terrors*, and a poetry collection, *Lake Effect*. Laura has been widely published in the United States and Ireland.

New Mountain Voices, Grades 6-8:



Kathy Manley lives in southern West Virginia where she has been an educator for over 35 years, and has won several prestigious teaching awards. She's a graduate of Marshall University and West Virginia University and a fellow of the 1995 WV Writing Project and the 1996 WV Humanities Council Appalachian Seminar. Her work has been featured in a wide variety of literary publications. Her memoir, *Don't Tell 'em You're Cold*, which was recently published by Mountain State Press, was a semi-finalist in William Faulkner's Writing Competition.

New Mountain Voices, Grades 9-12:



West Virginia native **Marie Manilla** is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her novel, *The Patron Saint of Ugly*, won the Weatherford Award. *Shrapnel* received the Fred Bonnie Award for Best First Novel. Stories in her collection, *Still Life with Plums*, first appeared in *Chicago Tribune*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Mississippi Review*, and elsewhere. Her nonfiction has appeared in *WordRiot*, *Cossack Review*, *Still*, and other journals.