



Blue Ridge Book & Author Showcase

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW DID THIS BOOK AND AUTHOR FESTIVAL CONCEPT ORIGINATE?

Book fairs were not new to Hendersonville when the idea for this program was germinating in late 2007. The **Friends of Connemara** (community support group for the **Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site**) had staged successful such events in 2003 and 2004. The **Johnson Farm** had been sponsor of a similar, but smaller, project in 2008 and earlier.

A group of thirteen literary-minded individuals were invited to meet on January 31, 2008 to explore the rationale, the potential, and the challenges, for creating in Henderson County a major annual event in celebration of books and authors, in some respects perhaps more ambitious than had been previously attempted. Although not without a few voices of caution and skepticism, the proposed project readily gained almost unanimous support and enthusiasm. Several key people attending this initial gathering committed to further involvement. The enterprise moved into launch mode.

WHO CAN ATTEND THE EVENT?

The festival is free and open to the public. There is no registration requirement. However, the building in which all activity will be centered has a limited attendance capacity of no more than 1,000, in compliance with fire code regulations. All seating is open. There are no reserved seats at any of the sessions. In the event of a greater number than the limit seeking entry, admission will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE EVENT BE HELD?

The venue for this inaugural Book & Author Showcase on May 9, 2009 (Mothers Day weekend) is in the magnificent new **Technical Education & Development Center** on the campus of the **Blue Ridge Community College**. All program activity, scheduled for a full Saturday of no more than four concurrent sessions in a single segment, will center in the conference hall section of the building, inside its huge main assembly area and in the ample perimeter corridors that surround it, all handicapped accessible. The main meeting area will be divided into three soundproof sections with a total seating capacity of 800-plus. Classroom space in another part of the building will also be used. The site is being made available at no cost to the Showcase, making the college a sponsoring partner.

WHO ARE THE PRINCIPAL SPONSORING AND COOPERATING PARTNERS?

Henderson County Travel & Tourism (the Visitors Center) was the first community resource to commit to a sponsoring partnership, ultimately approving a sizable grant to help finance promotional activity. Soon following were the **Blue Ridge Community College** (providing an ideal venue at no cost), the **Henderson County Education Foundation**

(becoming our fiscal sponsor and under whose umbrella the Showcase became a legally recognized nonprofit entity), and the **Times-News** (whose publisher gave a plentiful donation of free advertising space and projected feature/editorial coverage). A grant application to the **Community Foundation of Henderson County**, approved in November, 2008, added that organization to the supporting cast.

Joining with us as “Cooperating Partners,” offering advice and cooperative activity, were the **North Carolina Writers’ Network** and its western state affiliate **NCWN West**, **The Writers Workshop of Asheville** and the coordinated reading program of western North Carolina known as **Together We Read**.

HOW DO I GET TO THE EVENT SITE?

A map and detailed directions are shown on our web site: www.blueridgebookfest.org.

IS THERE A WRITTEN ACCOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS?

Yes. A summary of developmental history is available to anyone requesting such information. (See contacts at the end of this document).

WHO ARE THE FEATURED PRESENTING AUTHORS?

Fifteen successfully published and distinguished authors will offer program presentations. Their biographical summaries can be viewed on the Showcase website at www.blueridgebookfest.org. The same information is also available via email or hard copy mailing by contacting any of the executive committee members shown at the end of this document. Also available is a list of approximately 35 authors who will be showing their work at display tables in the perimeter corridor around the conference hall.

HOW IS THE FESTIVAL BEING ORGANIZED AND MANAGED?

From its earliest inception in late 2007, the planning, resource mobilization and policy development has been directed by a small group of volunteers who formed a governing body through which the enterprise took shape and gained traction. There has been no paid staff and much of the early expense associated with developmental activity has been borne by those who took a leadership role in the early stages.

ARE THERE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES?

There are five operating committees, each composed entirely of volunteers, a total participation of approximately sixty individuals: Fundraising, Patron Relations, Program, .Promotion/Publicity, and Site Coordination. Most of the volunteer requirements for each of those committees were filled before the end of 2008. Additional help is always welcome.

ARE THERE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES?

There are several levels of sponsorship participation with varying benefits. Since the festival is free and open to the public we must rely entirely on the generosity of sponsors to meet our budget goals. Detailed information about joining in support of this event is available

by contacting any of the individuals shown at the end of this document or by visiting our web site at www.blueridgebookfest.org.

ARE THERE ADEQUATE LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS?

Hendersonville is a popular tourist and vacation destination. There are varieties of accommodations available including bed & breakfast facilities, motels, inns, cabins and resorts—a total of almost 2,000 units! Several such facilities are among our event sponsors, are recommended for your consideration, and are found on our web site (subject to occasional updating) at www.blueridgebookfest.org. For more complete community-wide information, go to www.historichendersonville.org.

WILL THERE BE ANY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ON-SITE LUNCHES?

The event site at the Blue Ridge Community College is not located within walking distance to nearby restaurants. Arrangements have been made to have box lunches available in the school cafeteria and student lounge located in a building adjacent to the venue site. However, patrons of the book and author festival will require advanced paid reservations in order to assure availability. Sandwich menu selections will be posted. Ordering the lunch is highly recommended in order to avoid traffic congestion leaving and entering the parking areas to visit outlying restaurants. The box lunch cost is only \$6.00. Reservations may be made by sending a check in that amount, made out to HCEF (Henderson County Education Foundation), and mailed to Blue Ridge Book & Author Showcase, P.O. Box 6861, Hendersonville, NC 28793

HOW WILL AUTHORS PARTICIPATE?

Authors will participate on two tracks. Approximately fifteen prominent published writers will be presenters in a series of sessions at which they will discuss their work, their writing experiences, their motivations, and in some cases, the challenges of authorship and pathways to success. Their works will be available for sale and signing.

A second group of authors, numbering about thirty-five, will occupy display tables in the corridor around the perimeter of the conference hall. There they will show and sign their purchased books and be available to interact with patrons throughout the event day.

WILL THERE BE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION?

Part of the program will be devoted to features that will involve area students who will have opportunities to demonstrate creative writing talent and other aspects of their interest in the literary arts.

HOW WILL THE SHOWCASE BE PUBLICIZED?

The Promotion/Publicity Committee has a carefully planned strategy for bringing media attention to the event, not only through local print and broadcast outlets, but those at some considerable distance beyond Henderson County. A grant from **Henderson County Travel and Tourism** is earmarked for advertising placements outside the local core area.

Hendersonville's daily newspaper, the **Times-News**, has made available a generous gift of free advertising during the weeks leading up to event dates, this in addition to generous availability to editorial/feature space. Budget allocations include funds for the purchase of advertising space/time in other print/broadcast media.

A web site has been established (www.blueridgebookfest.org), designed to touch a wide audience of prospective attendees. Posters, rack cards, flyers and such, will further the reach of promotional activity.

IS THERE ADEQUATE PARKING?

The venue is surrounded by ample parking spaces within easy walking distance of the main entrance to the building. Reserved, more conveniently located handicapped parking will also be available.

HOW WILL BOOK SALES AND SIGNINGS BE HANDLED?

All book sales will be channeled through a central purchasing station operated by **Malaprop's Bookstore** of Asheville. No author works will be sold by authors directly.

Presenting authors will generally be available for signings and visiting at a table in the room in which they appear for a period of time following their presentations. Most also will be available at later designated times at a special table for presenting authors located in the exhibit corridor. Patrons may bring books already in their possession for author signing.

Souvenir book bags will be available for sale to make it easy to carry multiple purchases.

HOW WERE THE DATES FOR THE EVENT DETERMINED?

The date, May 9, 2009, was selected after consultation with **Henderson County Travel & Tourism** staff, assuring that the booking would not conflict other known community-wide events already scheduled. Falling on the Mothers Day weekend, the date was also seen to be a time favorable to tourists and visiting families.

WHERE CAN MORE DETAILED INFORMATION BE FOUND REGARDING THE PROGRAM SCHEDULE, LEADERSHIP ROSTER, MISSION STATEMENT, VOLUNTEER LISTINGS, DISPLAY TABLE AUTHORS, DIRECTIONS TO THE SITE, LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS, RESTAURANTS, ETC.?

Comprehensive information is set forth on the web site (www.blueridgebookfest.org). Programs and other event-related information will be given to all attendees as they register at the event welcome station. Brochures will be available covering community information about lodging accommodations, restaurants, places of interest and local activities before and after the festival. A message board will be prominently located for posting incoming and internal communications. Additional information can be requested through the following contacts:

Blue Ridge Book & Author Showcase
P.O. Box 6861, Hendersonville, NC 28793

Executive Committee

Bob Greenwald, Co-chair: patnbob2@gmail.com; 828-698-1550
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