

Authors Attending Our Local Author Evening

April 17, 2025



Rebecca Elswick lives in the mountains of southwestern Virginia where she was born, the daughter and granddaughter of coal miners. Her award-winning fiction and nonfiction have appeared in many journals and anthologies among them **Appalachian Magazine**, **Still the Journal**, and **Drafthorse**. Her new novel, *The Dream is the Truth* was published by Artemesia Publishing in February. Her award-winning debut novel, *Mama's Shoes* (2011) was published by **Writer's Digest**, the result of winning a contest. *No Stopping Her* was published in 2015 by

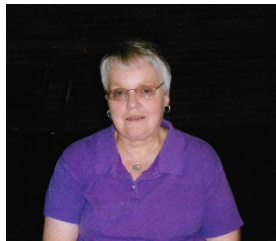
Gemma Media's Open Door Series for Adult Literacy. She also authored a teacher's manual/workbook to accompany the book. Rebecca is a lifelong teacher. She has an MFA in writing from West VA Wesleyan College, and an MEd. in Education from East Tennessee State University. She is currently a consultant for Buchanan County Schools and the Appalachian Writing Project at UVA Wise



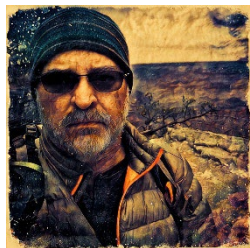
Freda (Deel) Hale and Ashley (Hale) Shortt

I have lived all but a few years of my life in Buchanan County, at the end of a road called Lum Holler. I am the oldest of four siblings, my dad was a coal miner, and my mom was a homemaker. I have been married for over 30 years to my husband, Jamie. I have worked for Buchanan County Public Schools for the past 24 years, most recently as a 7th grade History and Language Arts teacher. I began writing "Adventures in Fairylumbus" during COVID, for my granddaughter, Aubrey. It quickly grew to include stories for each of my younger nieces and nephews. I finished the last of the stories to include my youngest niece late last year. I then did a portrait sketch of each child and added them to the book.

I am Freda's daughter and the mother of Aubrey. I have been a small-business owner in Grundy, Virginia since 2017. Growing up in Lum Holler, I enjoyed playing outside in the dirt and using my only-child imagination. As a kid, I loved playing sports. Now as a mom, I enjoy sharing that love with my daughter, as my husband and I coach my daughter's T-Ball team. I've always loved using my hands to craft, draw and paint. I am so honored to have been able to help through my illustrations to bring these stories to life. Psalm 150:6--



Linda Hudson Hoagland, a regional writer from Tazewell, Virginia, has written many mystery novels along with works of nonfiction, 5 collections of short writings and 5 volumes of poems. She has contributed to many anthologies and will have them available.



Franklin Horton lives and writes in the mountains of southwestern Virginia. He submitted his first writing project to a magazine at thirteen years old, receiving the first of what would eventually be hundreds of rejections from agents and publishers. He's now completed over thirty-five novels and sold over a million books in ebook, paperback, and audio. He lives a hermit's life on a remote mountaintop, splitting his day between writing and tinkering in his shop like one of his characters.



Jonathan Gilliam is a writer with a passion for weaving words into worlds. Hailing from

Buchanan County, Virginia, he first gained recognition for his poetry, captivating friends and family on Facebook with his evocative verses. Encouraged by their support, he compiled his work into *Verses in Twilight*, a collection now available for readers who appreciate poetry that speaks to the soul.

While poetry remains at the heart of his writing, Jonathan's love for storytelling has led him into new creative frontiers. He has penned a Christmas ghost story novella set to release in **Christmas 2025**, blending the warmth of the holiday season with an eerie, timeless charm. Now, he is deep in the creation of an **epic sci-fi novel**, a project that embodies his lifelong admiration for fantasy and science fiction. Inspired by literary titans such as **William Shakespeare, J.R.R.**

Tolkien, and R.A. Salvatore, his writing carries a richness in language, deep character exploration, and worldbuilding that transports readers beyond the ordinary.

An avid reader and lover of all things fantastical, Jonathan finds endless inspiration in **Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and Back to the Future**, as well as in the vivid storytelling of **graphic novels, comics, and manga**. When he isn't writing, he's likely buried in a book, dreaming up new tales, or envisioning how his stories might one day unfold on the big screen.

Looking ahead, Jonathan has ambitious plans. He hopes to publish more poetry collections, bring a play he has written to the stage, and perhaps, one day, see his **epic sci-fi novel transformed into a motion picture**.

Follow his journey and explore his works at jonathangilliam.my.canva.site or connect with him on **Facebook**.



Victoria Fletcher lives in Damascus, Virginia. She has written 26 books with 27 due out in April. She also has poems, recipes, and short stories in several anthologies and cookbooks.



Darren Frey is an American suspense writer, an adventurer and seeker of knowledge. As a blind man and survivor of domestic abuse, he has faced and overcome several difficult obstacles and learned many valuable life lessons that he incorporates into his writing.

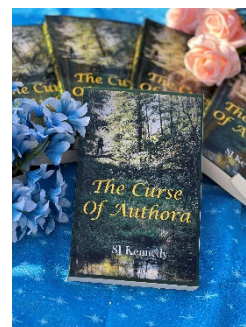
It is his philosophy; difficult experiences teach us how to be better people and connect with others in ways that are relatable and easy to understand.

It is his hope that through his words, others can find their way out of the darkness, embrace love and light; to take all they have learned and create something positive.

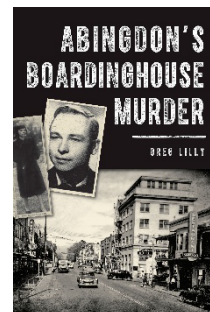
You can find his books on Amazon or follow him on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/darrenfreyauthor



SJ Kennedy has lived in Tazewell and Russell County her whole life. She has a passion for writing and always has. In her free time she enjoys writing, reading, walking outdoors, and just being creative. *The Curse of Authora* is her debut novel. She is excited to be in the community and share her book.



Greg Lilly grew up in the rich storytelling tradition of Southwest Virginia. He's the author of the Derek Mason Mystery series. While living in Sedona, Arizona, Greg chronicled the high desert characters—past and present—in his award-winning books. Greg relocated to Williamsburg, Virginia, where he wrote and edited a monthly magazine. Today, he lives in Abingdon, Virginia, and writes historical true crime. His recent book, *Abingdon's Boardinghouse Murder* (2024, The History Press) is nominated for the 2025 Agatha Award for Nonfiction.



Deb Linkous is a great-grandmother, a Bible teacher and a retired librarian. Over the years she also worked as a donut maker at a grocery store, a sewing machine operator at a sweatshirt factory, a substitute teacher in public schools, and a receptionist in a college admissions office.

The seventh of eight children, Deb was born and raised in Tazewell County, Virginia. The family lived in a five-room house, and the children attended a two-room schoolhouse where two teachers taught grades one through six. Neither house nor school had indoor plumbing. (For more on this, read Deb's *Memories Like Water*.)

Deb grew up believing she was richly blessed. She still does.

Deb has four books in print:

Evening Wolves is the first book in the “One Shepherd One Fold” series. In *Evening Wolves*, a bold young wolf, bent on becoming the next pack leader, is disguised as a sheep in order to overthrow a powerful shepherd who has destroyed a hunting party and allegedly brought a slaughtered lamb back to life. (*Tender Wolf*, the second book in the series should be printed in time to be available at Buchanan County Public Library’s Local Author Night on April 17.)

Job Untangled: A Bible Study is a commentary for the non-academic Bible student, the person who doesn’t read Greek and Hebrew, but who wants to get a better understanding of the grassroots truths in the Biblical book of *Job*.

Get Blessed Stay Blessed is not just a study guide. It offers an invitation for spiritual growth, as it examines the seven universal blessings in the book of *The Revelation*. Deb breaks down each blessed statement, clarifies it with everyday language and offers Biblical insight into questions, such as: What is the first resurrection, and how can you have part in it? What does it mean to reign with Christ for a thousand years? To have right to the tree of life? To enter in through the gates of the city?

Memories Like Water is divided into four parts. The first two consist of the author’s early memories; the third contains anecdotes of her three biological children and their children. The fourth, and longest, describes events that took place after she surrendered her life to the Lord, giving testimony of God’s power, love and mercy.



Damean Mathews was born in Tazewell, Virginia and almost immediately fell in love with literature. From an early age he preferred to be in the company of books than most anyone else, taking books with him everywhere he went. The only thing that matched his love of the written word was his fascination with the paranormal. Ghosts, vampires, werewolves, legends and monsters make up much of Damean’s life.

While exploring this urge to write his own material Damean got a story idea that “absolutely demanded to be written. I had no idea how something in my own head could be so powerful. It was in that exact moment that I knew I had to write.”

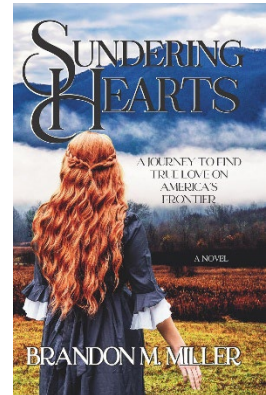
Damean is incredibly proud of his Appalachian culture and loves to explore the region his ancestors lived in. He often emphasizes elements of that culture within his writing and makes it a mission to seek out as much mountain lore and legend he possibly can, both for personal enjoyment and to use in his writing. He has published three short story and poetry collections and six novels since 2018, in genres including horror, Appalachian fiction, and fantasy.

Damean teaches high school English and continues to write while loving every second of life with his incredible wife, who provides endless support and encouragement, in their mountain home.



Living in the heart of Southwestern Virginia, Brandon finds solace surrounded by the majestic Appalachian Mountains. For over two decades, he has been a dedicated history teacher and an avid learner of the subject. Recently, he has also discovered a newfound passion for writing, which has become the driving force behind his soul, igniting immense enthusiasm within him.

Happily married, Brandon cherishes his two beautiful daughters more than anything in the world.



Tonia A. Viles is an Indie Author specializing in the fantasy genre. She has self-published three books in a world of her creation, Grandel Isle, the battleground for Earth. The next Grandel Isle set is on the horizon. You can see her love for all living things, from the creepy crawlies to the bold and beautiful, whether factual or fiction, throughout all her books. A lifelong storyteller, Tonia holds a diploma from the Institute of Children's Literature. She is a single mom, living in the serene-forested mountains of Saltville, Va, with her three rescue pets: two crazy cats Naria and Orchid and her beloved dog Scooby.