

Authors in the Hills of Mulmur returns this weekend

Written By **Constance Scrafield**

Welcoming three authors, new to the Hills of Mulmur readings and conversation, this annual summer staging is happily back in the Foley Barn on Sunday, Aug. 25, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

It was founded by the now Mayor of Mulmur Janet Horner after someone floated the idea of a literary event in Mulmur. Enthusiastic about the plan, Ms. Horner naturally contacted Nancy Frater, founder and owner of BookLore in Orangeville, who was thrilled with the idea.

The Authors in the Hills is set in the lovely Foley Barn on a farm owned by Pat and David Foley. It was built in 2012 on the restored foundation of the original barn, replacing the old building with new pine. If the owners wondered what they might do with this beautiful building, hosting the authors' afternoons there is certainly an example of using it well.

Nancy Frater said, "This is the seventh year. Each year we have a different theme by looking at what the common unifying theme is. We like to bring different genres to the audience - maybe some authors they didn't know before but will enjoy meeting."

This year's theme, "Hilarious, Heartwarming, Historical - Stories in Unusual Places" called to award-winning author, Rod Carley and his new book, "Ruff." The setting, characters and plot of this fictional rendering of Shakespeare's moment in time, one might call it, Ruff is consistently described as "madcap."

Will Shakespeare is having a problem, we are told. Among his mid-life crisis, the plague and the death of the ancient queen, followed by a literary competition for royal backing by the new king, his life is in turmoil. It is "an outrageous and compelling tale of ghosts, ghostwriting, writer's block, and the chopping block," is how Mr. Carley's synopsis describes it.

Rod Carley uses humour to interact with history. Mrs. Frater told us that he likes writing about Elizabethan times, while still touching on issues that are relevant to today.

Best-selling author, Natalie Jenner is bringing "Every Time We Say Goodbye." Taking us back to post-war Italy and the film world of the 1950s, Ms. Jenner weaves a story, wrapped in the setting of the Italian film industry.

Faced in 1955 with the failure and closing of her new play in British London, Vivien Lowry moves on to a job as "a script doctor" in Rome, Italy and learns about the burden the past can put on the potential of the future.

Author of The Jane Austen Society and Bloomsbury Girls, Natalie Jenner's new book has been called dazzling and passionate.

Nita Prose will join this day in the hills of Mulmur, with her first two very successful mystery novels. The Maid is set in the prestigious Regency Grand Hotel, where a hotel maid, Molly Gray finds a dead man in a room in the hotel. Pretty quickly she realizes that she must solve the mystery or possibly bear the blame for the death of the client.

As a sequel, The Mystery Guest continues to rely on Molly Gray to discover the truth behind the sudden death of a famous mystery writer J.D. Grimthorpe "in the tea room of the hotel! Will her personal history play a part in the discovery of the killer?"

The Maid attracted readers at the time, somewhat surprisingly, selling over two million copies.

"Nita has made a name for herself," said Mrs. Frater. "Her third book is coming for Christmas, with a fourth scheduled for sometime next year."

Bernadette Hardaker is back this year as moderator, to guide and cajole the authors about their writing, inspirations and more.

As with all such charming times for literary fans who have attended the Foley Barn for the author's afternoon events, there will be the usual revelry, with drinks and food, Mrs. Frater assured us. There will likewise be time to meet the authors and purchase signed copies of their books.

Mrs. Frater commented that she is looking forward to being there.

"We don't rent the Foley Barn out but we do leave it nice and clean," she said.

What Mrs. Frater loves about this authors' event is how organically it came to be by a simple phone call to Janet Horner when someone in Mulmur mentioned having a local literary festival.

The sense of community inspires her to keep being involved in these authors' afternoons, "When I look at 150 people coming together, especially in this wonderful, beautiful barn and enjoying themselves so much."

They are a very small organizing committee of Nancy Frater herself, Mayor Janet Horner, and Rose Dotten, CEO of the Shelburne Public Library. A very harmonious group of volunteers, she calls them. The ladies have been joined by assistant librarian Jade Wyse, artist Carole Watson and Candace Watson-Hiscox.

Mrs. Frater commented, "We just want to do something so that people have a wonderful time out. Doing things for the community is a great thing in itself."

"When we start to bring authors to Theatre Orangeville, there is a fabulous line up," she said.

Authors in the Hills of Mulmur is this Sunday, Aug. 25, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 587146 Side Road 10 and First Line East in Mulmur. For tickets, go to BookLore (121 First Street, Orangeville) or call the store at 519-942-3830. Tickets are also available at the Mulmur Township Office, which can be phoned at 705-466-3341 and the Shelburne Public Library, which can be phoned at 519-925-2166 or email treasurer@shelburnelibrary.ca to purchase a ticket.