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9-4-2016

### Starcropolis: Theatre Under the Star

Ernest Zulia

*Hollins University*

Katherine Fralin

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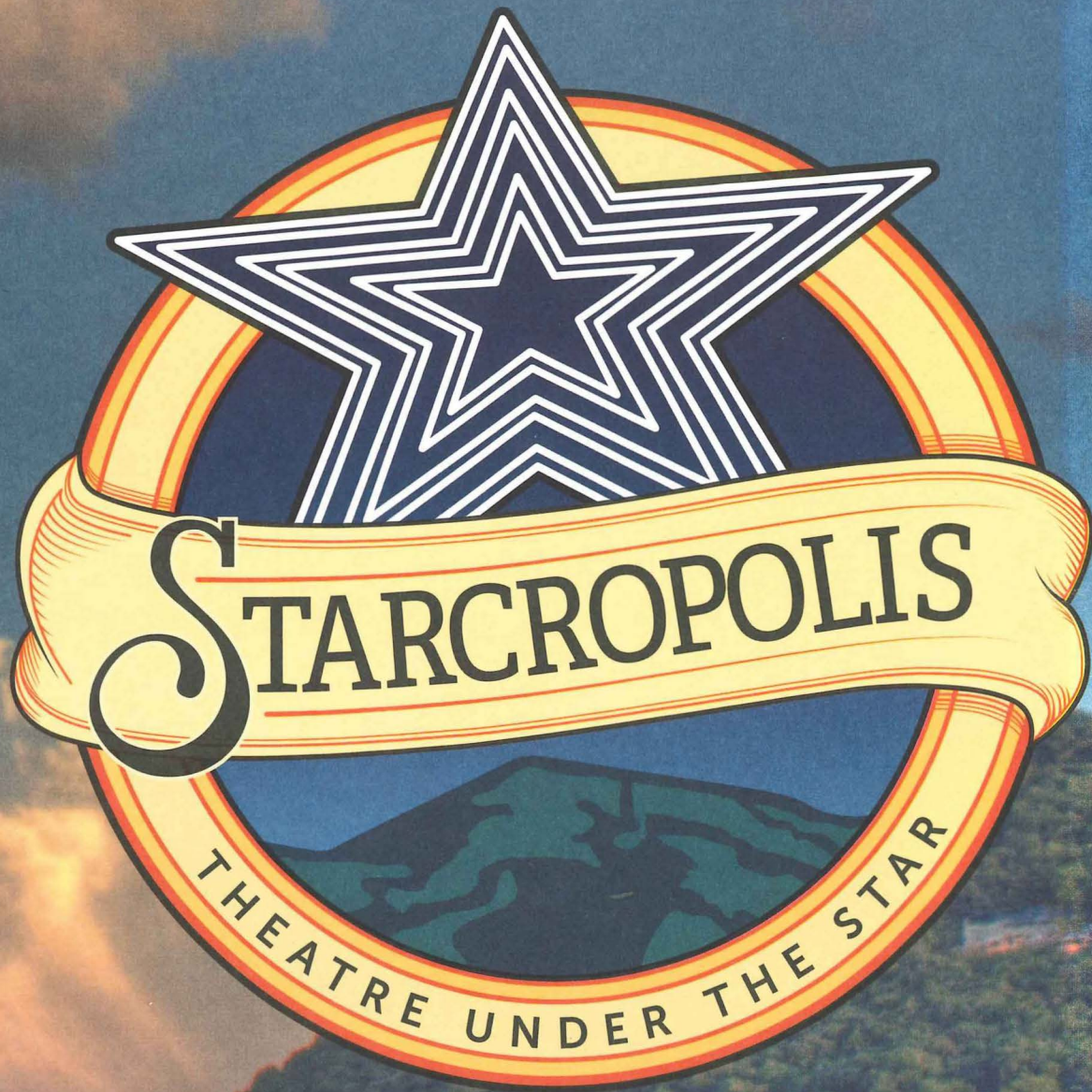
#### Recommended Citation

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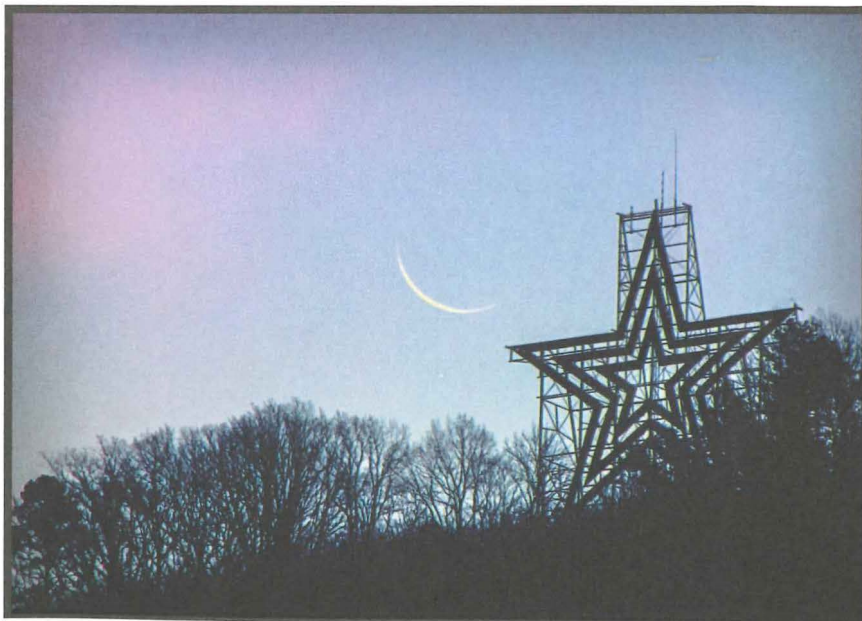
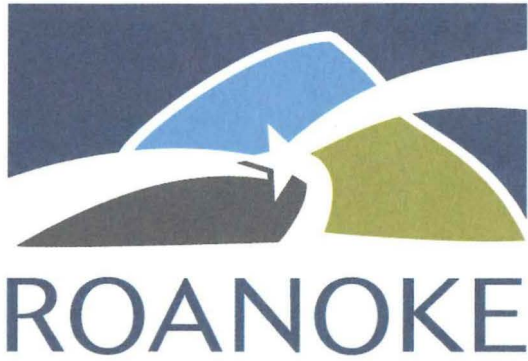
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A unique festival of live theatre  
celebrating Mill Mountain, the Roanoke Star,  
and the people who make it glow!



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2016

Presented by  
Hollins Theatre Institute and Hollins University  
With the City of Roanoke and Mill Mountain Theatre



# Why Theatre? Why Starcropolis?

The ancient Greeks gathered on mountaintops to get closer to the gods and closer to each other. They came together to witness stories and see themselves in characters who, like them, were just trying to figure out what it means to be human...to be alive. And the Greeks knew it was better to figure it out together, in the same place, breathing the same air and experiencing the same moments...human moments of comedy and tragedy...and moments of enlightenment.

Theatre is the most collaborative art form of all. It cannot be created in solitude like a painting. It can only be created through a communal process. And the most important part of the collaborative process is the one between audience and actor. The exchange of energy between the two creates dramatic moments where truth can exist. These moments are sacred, making us all participants in a sacred ritual. That is community.

As our lives accelerate, we marvel at the technological forms of communication that link us to one another around the clock and across the globe. We also find ourselves alone, behind one kind of screen or another, engaged in the complicated process of communication. At a time when technology threatens to isolate us at increasing levels, and voices threaten to pull us apart with fear, it is more important than ever to reach for each other and the threads that hold us together.

Theatre invites us to do this, perhaps making it more relevant and vital today than when the Greeks invented it over two thousand years ago. The theatre awakens us to the things that make us human, and to each other, giving us the opportunity to experience a glimpse of truth... together.

## That's Why Theatre. But Why Starcropolis?

There is one thing for sure that connects all of us who live in the Roanoke Valley -- a giant neon star. Everyone's got some connection to the star, whether it's an attitude, or a feeling, or a story. We can't escape its glow, or the symbolism of the light it sheds over the place we all call home.

If you go and hang out at the star any time of the day or night, you will meet the people who share your world and get a glimpse at the rich tapestry of our community. If the star could talk, she'd have plenty of stories to tell. Starcropolis creates the mechanism for us to gather and share these Star Stories...our stories...and experience what it means to be alive in Roanoke, in this moment, on this mountaintop, in the glow of one another's light...together.

—Ernie Zulia

Dear Star Catchers:

Welcome to Starcropolis, and thank you for joining us for this amazing gathering. We're crazy about this place where we live, and the people who populate it, and we know we're not the only ones. So along with a lot of great friends and colleagues, and the magic of theatre, we have tried to create something that can capture what is fairly impossible to put into words. It's mind blowing how many people have donated so much time, money, and enthusiasm to make Starcropolis happen. It looks like we all believe in the same thing...each other!

Special thanks must go to our sponsors, who believe in things like Starcropolis, Roanoke, and the people who make her special.

First and foremost, to President Nancy Gray and Hollins University and City Manager Chris Morrill and the City of Roanoke: partners who believe that great things come when knowledge and the humanities join with the government and the people to say, "Life is good...especially here!"

And to Mill Mountain Theatre for keeping the lights on and the plays coming. Since your first performance here on the mountain in 1964, you have continued to inspire us all.

Thank you to the remarkable guest writers and members of the Hollins Playwright's Lab for ascending the mountain to create new plays that tell our stories, as they continue to make Roanoke an exciting ignition point for new works in the American theatre.

And to the Fishburn family whose tremendous gift through Foundation for Roanoke Valley made Starcropolis possible. When your family gave 100 acres on the top of Mill Mountain to create a public park for all to enjoy, not only did they create a legacy for us all, they also gave us our very own acropolis. And along with fellow sponsors and believers, Davis H. Elliot Company, Hometown Bank, and Carilion Clinic, your support strengthens our community and our lives.

And to Stage Sound, Access, Chocklett Press, and the other wonderful businesses listed in the playbill that provided generous in-kind services and products. It takes a village, and we are so grateful you are part of ours.

And to all the people who have volunteered their time and energy into making one magical night of theatre on Mill Mountain. You are true "star catchers," and we are all better because of your generous spirits.

Things like Starcropolis happen because of faith...faith in the value of the arts, in the importance of theatre, and in each other.

The Roanoke Star isn't going anywhere! It is our hope that the spirit of Starcropolis will continue through projects such as the Roanoke Public Library's "Starry Corp" and pop-up performances of Star Stories yet to come. And who knows, maybe we will meet again here at our acropolis atop Mill Mountain to celebrate one another through the magic of live theatre.

Thank you for your inspiration!

Katherine Fralin and Ernie Zulia  
Codirectors of Starcropolis

# Starcropolis Main Stage

## Star Stories...If the Star Could Talk

Conceived by KATHERINE FRALIN and ERNIE ZULIA  
Directed by ERNIE ZULIA

### ***Hellos and Goodbyes***

by Laura King  
Morton-Rick Blunt  
Robin-Ami Trowell  
Amanda-Erica Musyt

### ***Statue of Liberty***

by John Patrick Bray  
Jack-Patrick Regal  
Edna-Marion Grey

### ***Petting***

by Lee Smith

### ***Roy and Me***

by Lee Smith  
Sally-Thesa Loving

### ***Star Secrets***

by Joy Sylvester-Johnson  
She-Amanda Mansfield  
He-Michael Mansfield

### ***February at the Star***

by Robert Fulghum  
Man-Shane Strawbridge  
Woman-Bayla Sussman  
Fred-Tom Honer  
Daughters-Bonny Branch, Vanessa Mills

### ***Next Year at the Roanoke Star***

by Maura Campbell  
Debra East-Charlotte Pearl  
Midge-Mikayla Parker  
Mrs. East-Erica Musyt

### ***Let's Not Over Analyze This***

by Paul Sambol  
Lisa-Bonny Branch  
Julie-Ami Trowell

### ***Hope in America***

by Elizabeth Heffron  
Ted-Thom Moore  
Yana-Marion Grey

### ***Second Star to the Right***

by Shane Strawbridge  
Peter-Shane Strawbridge

### ***Flag Burning***

by Jill McCorkle  
Kate-Amanda Mansfield  
Woman 1-Thesa Loving  
Woman 2-Megan McCranie  
Phil-Todd Ristau  
Waitress-Natalie Pendergast

### ***Shank of the Evening***

by Ben Jolivet  
Person-Rick Blunt

### ***Pretty Little White Lies***

by Dwayne Yancey  
Man 1-Thom Moore  
Man 2-Simon Adkins

### ***From Beginning to End***

by Eric Edson  
Sam-Nick McCord  
Bethany-Vanessa Mills

### ***Street Sweeper: Andrew Moore AReal Man...A Mostly True Story***

by Beth Macy and Tom Landon  
Andrew Moore-Jasper McGruder

### ***Opening Night***

by Ernie Zulia  
Wanda-Dawn Wells  
Vietnam Vet-George Spelvin

Order of plays subject to change

Dramaturg.....Kevin Ferguson      Lighting Designer.....Ann Courtney  
Associate Director.....Susanna Young      Costume Designers.....Julie and Lee Hunsaker  
Musical Director.....David Caldwell      Sound and Lighting Supervisor.....Reid Henion  
Scene Designer/Technical Director.....John Forsman      Stage Manager.....Shelby Taylor Love

## Codirectors

**KATHERINE FRALIN**, Ph.D., is the founding director of the Batten Leadership Institute at Hollins University. In addition to her post at Hollins, Fralin supports leaders from all fields in their ongoing leadership development. Fralin actively engages in the arts and community building in Roanoke. She has cofounded a music hall, developed a number of community arts initiatives, and has served on numerous nonprofit boards. She served as a founding board member of several organizations, and currently serves as founding board member of the Roanoke Cultural Endowment. Fralin's shameless eavesdropping, especially at the Mill Mountain Star, sparked the idea for Star Stories.

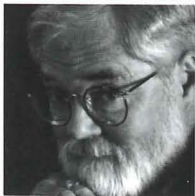


**ERNIE ZULIA** serves as artistic director and chair of the Hollins Theatre Institute. He worked as a professional theatre artist for over 25 years before coming to Hollins in 2004. Zulia is the recipient of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Award for Outstanding Teaching Artist. In addition to his many productions on the Hollins stage, he has directed dozens of plays, musicals, operas, and world premieres in regional theatres throughout the United States and internationally, including the Barter Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and the Asolo Theatre. He served as associate artistic director at Mill Mountain Theatre from 1987 to 1995. His stage adaptation of Robert Fulghum's international best-selling book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, which premiered at Mill Mountain Theatre in 1992, has received thousands of productions around the world. He also created and directed the musical revue of the songs of Academy Award-winning composer Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*), titled *Magic to Do*, which he directed at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. A member of SDC and the Dramatists Guild, Zulia holds a B.A. in English and drama from SUNY Geneseo and an M.F.A. in directing from Northwestern University.



## Guest Writers

**ROBERT FULGHUM** is an international bestselling author who has the distinction of having books in the #1 and #2 slots on the *New York Times* bestseller list at the same time. He has over 14 million copies of 12 books in 23 languages in print. His most popular book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, was adapted for the stage by Ernie Zulia and premiered at Mill Mountain Theatre in 1992. It has had more than 3,000 productions and tens of thousands of performances around the world.



**LEE SMITH** (Hollins class of 1967) is a *New York Times* bestselling author and the recipient of multiple awards, including the Academy Award in Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Growing up in the Appalachian Mountains of Southwest Virginia, nine-year-old Smith was already writing--and selling, for a nickel apiece--stories about her neighbors in the coal boomtown of Grundy and the nearby isolated "hollers." Since graduating from Hollins, she has published 11 novels, as well as three collections of short stories. Smith's writing, along with that of her friend Jill McCorkle, was featured in the off-Broadway hit musical *Good Ol' Girls*, which played to sold-out audiences at Hollins in 2011.



**BETH MACY** (Hollins M.A., class of 1993) is a journalist who writes about outsiders and underdogs. She is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Factory Man*, which is in development for a major motion picture starring Tom Hanks. Her writing has won more than a dozen national awards, including a Nieman Fellowship for Journalism at Harvard and the 2013 J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award. Her new book, *Truevine*, is a riveting American tale about race, greed, and the human condition. The unforgettable story of what happened in Truevine, Virginia, will shock readers even as it warms their hearts. Macy lives in Roanoke with her husband, videographer and journalist Tom Landon, who co-authored her Star Story, *Street Sweeper*.



**TOM LANDON** is a teacher and television producer who lives in Roanoke. He holds a master's degree in instructional technology from Virginia Tech and teaches AP Human Geography for Virtual Virginia, a program of the Virginia Department of Education. In 2007 he was the principal videographer and coproducer of the award-winning film shot in Nepal titled *A Gift for the Village*. He had a brief stint as the "What's On Your Mind" columnist for *The Roanoke Times*. Landon lives in Roanoke with his wife, writer Beth Macy. They have two sons, 22 and 18, and two rescue dogs, Mavis and Charley, who can regularly be seen pulling Tom up Mill Mountain on the Star Trail.



**JILL MCCORKLE**, (Hollins M.A., class of 1991) has the distinction of having her first two novels published on the same day in 1984. Of these novels, *The New York Times Book Review* said, "One suspects the author of *The Cheer Leader* is a born novelist...with *July 7th*, she is also a full-grown one." Since then she has published three additional novels and four collections of short stories. Five of her books have been named *New York Times* notable books. McCorkle has received the New England Booksellers Award, the John Dos Passos Prize for Excellence in Literature, and the North Carolina Award for Literature. She is a member



of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. With her friend Lee Smith, McCorkle co-authored the off-Broadway hit musical *Good Ol' Girls*.

**DWAYNE YANCEY** is a journalist by profession and a playwright by avocation. Most of his time is spent writing and working as editorial page editor of *The Roanoke Times*. He took up playwriting several years ago to amuse himself and has been pleasantly surprised to find that others have enjoyed his work as well. He lives in Fincastle, Virginia, with his wife and two children, all of whom are veterans of the local community theatre stage. His plays were produced at Studio Roanoke by the Hollins Playwright's Lab, and frequently performed at No Shame Theatre.



**JOHN PATRICK BRAY's** plays have been produced with various festivals and theatres in New York City and are published with Original Works Publishing, Next Stage Press, Indie Theatre Now, JACPublishing, and Heartland Plays; and in anthologies published by Applause and Smith and Kraus. Bray has a Ph.D. in theatre from Louisiana State University and an M.F.A. in playwriting from the Actors Studio Drama School/New School for Drama. He is an assistant professor at the University of Georgia and a member of the Dramatists Guild of America.



**PAUL SAMBOL** has written 16 one-act plays presented as Centerpieces at Mill Mountain Theatre. His full-length play, *The Straight Man*, winner of the Norfolk Southern New Play Competition, was also produced at Mill Mountain. He has had plays produced and developed in New York, London, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

**JOY SYLVESTER-JOHNSON** is the author of two musicals, *Soup, Soap and Salvation* (produced at Mill Mountain in 1998 and 2002) and *Christmas Cookies* (produced at Roanoke Children's Theatre in 2011). Her "twitter prayers" can be found at JoyPreeets. Retiring from her real job as CEO of the Rescue Mission in 2017, she plans to read more plays, see more plays, and write more plays.



## Hollins Playwrights

**MAURA CAMPBELL** is a playwright, director, and screenwriter whose plays have been produced on the West Coast (*Flower Duet*, Road Theatre), New York (New York Indian Film Festival, *Rosalee Was Here*; and Manhattan Rep, *Wild Geese*), and Virginia (Mill Mountain Theatre, *Dreamtime*; Studio Roanoke, *Rosalee Was Here*). Recent productions include *Memory Palace* (Good Theatre Company, Connecticut and Vermont Actor's Rep) and *Fantasia De Colores* (Theatre Mosaic Mond, Vermont). Campbell has a B.A. in liberal studies from



Norwich University and an M.F.A. in playwriting from Hollins University.

**ERIC EIDSON** is an M.F.A. candidate in playwriting at Hollins University. He is currently the theatre director at Overland High School in Aurora, Colorado. In addition to playwriting and teaching, Eidson also develops new plays and acts and directs in various theatre companies in Colorado. He fostered his love of playwriting in Roanoke.



**ELIZABETH HEFFRON** is a Seattle-based playwright. She currently teaches at Cornish College of the Arts, ACT Young Playwrights Program, and at Freehold Theatre/Lab, where she has spent six seasons working with women of the Washington Correctional Center for Women on inmate-generated performance pieces. She is an alumna of the Seattle Rep Writers Group and a member of the Sandbox Artists Collective and the Dramatists Guild. She holds an M.F.A. in playwriting from Hollins University.



**BEN JOLIVET's** work has been developed and produced on the East, West, and Gulf coasts. He is a two-time semifinalist for the Eugene O'Neill Conference and a finalist for Sanguine Theatre Company's Project Playwright and the 2016 SETC Getchell Award. He received a 2013 Massachusetts Cultural Council Dramatic Writing Fellowship and the 2014 Silver Spring Stage one-act festival judge's award for best script. He currently serves as playwright-in-residence at the Wilbury Theatre Group. He received a B.A. from Southern New Hampshire University and is a student in the M.F.A. program in playwriting at Hollins University.



**LAURA KING** is an award-winning playwright who resides south of Atlanta. She holds an M.F.A. in playwriting from Hollins University and is an instructor of theatre at Gordon State College. King's plays are available at StageRights, YouthPLAYS, Polychoron Press, and the New Play Exchange.



**CAITLIN MCCOMMIS** is a playwright out of St. Louis, Missouri. Her one-act play *Vinyl Doctors* was produced as part of the FAST New Play Festival in Iowa City in April 2008. Her full-length play *You Won't See Me* received a workshop production at Tesseract Theatre in St. Louis in May 2013, and her full-length play *This Is Nowhere* was given a pre-premiere production at Tesseract Theatre in May 2013. She is the ensemble playwright-in-residence with the Tesseract Theatre. She is currently pursuing her M.F.A. in playwriting at Hollins University.





**MEREDITH DAYNA LEVY**'s historical drama *Decision Height* has been published by Samuel French, Inc., and produced by theatres across the country. Levy is a founding member of dwellings dancetheatre, a collaborative partnership between herself and dance maker Patricia Brooks Cope. With the support of Roanoke Ballet Theatre, they have created *The Tinker*, a monthly works-in-progress performance series for local and affiliated performance artists to engage audiences through unfinished works. Levy is pursuing her M.F.A. in playwriting at Hollins University. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild.



**WENDY-MARIE MARTIN** earned an M.F.A. in playwriting from the Playwright's Lab at Hollins University and holds a B.F.A. in acting as well. She has written, directed, and produced intimate theatre projects in the U.S. and Europe. Her short plays have been produced in Germany, The Netherlands, Australia, and the U.S. She is also creator and executive producer of the Red Eye 10s Play Festival, a nationwide festival of original shorts. Martin is a member of the Dramatists Guild, Theatre Communications Group, and Playwrights' Center.



**TODD RISTAU** designed the Playwright's Lab at Hollins University and has served as program director since its 2007 launch. He is a distinguished graduate of the Iowa Playwright's Workshop and his plays have been performed in theatres across the U.S. and England, including London's West End. Ristau founded No Shame Theatre in 1986 and oversaw its evolution into a national network of venues for new work. He worked with Mill Mountain Theatre's literary associate overseeing new works programming, and was Studio Roanoke's first artistic director. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild and Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America, and currently serves KCACTF Region IV as chair of the national playwriting program and SETC as playwriting chair. Ristau wrote the *Star Trail Stories* for Starcropolis.



**DAVID SCHWINGLE** is a playwright, an assistant professor, and an actor living, teaching, and performing "acts of theatre" in South Carolina. He has a passion for creating new stories and sharing them with an audience, and he loves helping others do the same. Schwingle has just completed his M.F.A. in playwriting as a member of the Playwright's Lab at Hollins University.



## Main Stage Performers

### Special Guest Artist

**DAWN WELLS** is best known for her role as Mary Ann Summers on the CBS sitcom *Gilligan's Island*. She was born in Reno, Nevada, and attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, where she majored in chemistry. She transferred to the



University of Washington in Seattle, where she graduated in 1960 with a degree in theatre arts and design. In Hollywood, Wells made her debut on ABC's *The Roaring 20s* and was cast in episodes of such television shows as *77 Sunset Strip*, *The Cheyenne Show*, *Maverick*, and *Bonanza*, before she took the role of Mary Ann on *Gilligan's Island*. She reprised her character in the various *Gilligan's Island* reunion specials, including a reunion cartoon spin-off, *Gilligan's Planet*, and three reunion movies. She also appeared as a guest star on multiple TV shows, including *The Love Boat*, *Fantasy Island*, *ALF*, *Herman's Head*, *Three Sisters*, *Pastor Greg*, and *Roseanne*. Following *Gilligan's Island*, Wells embarked on a theatre career, appearing in nearly 100 theatrical productions. She also had a one-woman show at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. In 2005, Wells consigned for sale her original gingham blouse and shorts ensemble from her signature role as Mary Ann. A Beverly Hills auction house, Profiles in History, sold it for \$20,700. In 2014 she released *What Would Mary Ann Do? A Guide to Life*, which she cowrote with Roanoke writer and well-known cartoonist Steve Stinson. The book was released to coincide with the 50th anniversary of *Gilligan's Island*. In Idaho, Wells runs a business, Wishing Wells Collections, making clothing for people with limited mobility. She is the founder of the Idaho Film and Television Institute, with "a vision of education, technical training, and economic development in Southeastern Idaho." Her manager, Leonard Carter, is a native Roanoker and well-known filmmaker and videographer. He introduced Wells to the unique charms of the region, which prompted her to share her enthusiasm for the Star City and lend her enormous talents to Starcropolis.

**SIMON ADKINS** has performed in various local plays, including *New Works by Friends and Students of Todd*, *The Ross Laguzza Show*, and *People Like Ami or Turtle Who Need an Actor Right Now*. He is typically cast as a clown, a villain, a villainous clown, a clownish villain, or a character so clever you could put a tail on him and call him a weasel.



**RICK BLUNT** has worked as a professional actor for 10 years, primarily at the American Shakespeare Center. While on tour he performed for and taught Shakespeare workshops at such places as University of Texas, Georgetown, and Mississippi State. Blunt's work with Hollins Theatre includes *Almost, Maine*, *Distracted*, a devised work called *Rockin' Shakespeare*, and a one-hour version of *Macbeth*, which was performed as part of his Shakespeare Bootcamp.



**BONNY BRANCH** is a visual artist and ballroom dance and yoga instructor from Roanoke who loves performing. She studied with Double Edge Theatre in Massachusetts and the American Dance Festival in North Carolina. Branch has performed with Hollins University in *Decision Height*, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, *An Initial Condition*, *Helvetica*,



and most recently as Mama in *Distracted*.

**MARION GREY**, originally from Roanoke, is a Washington, D.C.-based actress. She is anticipating the release this fall of her first short film (*Dinner Party*) and her first web series (*Speak For Yourself*). In May, she completed a yearlong national tour with Olney Theatre Center's National Players. Her favorite roles were Puck (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Portia (*Julius Caesar*). Grey recently graduated from James Madison University with a B.A. in theatre and dance.



**TOM HONER** began his theatre career at St. Cloud State College, after being in the Navy for four years. He also acted in numerous shows at Waterloo Playhouse and Omaha Playhouse, receiving the Fonda-McGuire award for actor of the year while in Omaha. When Honer moved to Roanoke he became involved in Showtimers as actor, director, and member of the board of directors. He has also acted at Mill Mountain Theatre, Hollins University, and Southwest Virginia Ballet.



**THESA LOVING** Film: *Distant Vision* (dir: Francis Ford Coppola). National tours: *Oklahoma!*, *Fiddler on the Roof*. Regional tours: *Fiddler on the Roof*. NY: *The City Beneath* (Dir: Estelle Parsons) *Little Women*, *To Love and To Cherish*, *Prescriptions*, *Dylan*, *Curse of the Starving Class*. NY Cabaret: *A Moment With...Thesa Loving*. TV: *Americas Most Wanted*, *Oklahoma Passage*. Regional (selected lead roles): *Good Ol' Girls*, *The Music Man*, *The King and I*, *Noises Off*, *Chapter Two*, *Prisoner of Second Avenue*, *Quilters*, *Rain*. Lifetime Member of The Actors Studio.



**AMANDA MANSFIELD** has performed in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Louisville, and Roanoke. She is a founder of Classics at Brucemore and founding director of Children's Classics at Brucemore in Cedar Rapids. Mansfield most recently appeared in the Hollins Playwright's Festival productions of *Adverse Effects* and *Helvetica*, and in the Off the Rails' productions of *The Children's Hour* and *Doubt*. She is the donor relations coordinator for the Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation.



**MICHAEL MANSFIELD** has worked with a wide variety of local arts organizations, including Mill Mountain Theatre, Showtimers, Opera Roanoke, Roanoke Ballet Theatre, Roanoke Children's Theatre, Little Town Players, and Off the Rails Theatre. Most recently he was in *Antigone* and *Proof*, and he was lucky enough to be a part of both the Roanoke and New York productions of *Helvetica* and *Adverse Effects*.



**NICK MCCORD** is an actor and playwright from Seattle, who has been making up stories as long as he can remember. McCord is currently pursuing his M.F.A in playwrighting from Hollins University.



**JASPER MCGRUDER** has performed at Yale Rep, the Kennedy Center, and the Barter Theatre, including *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Looking Over the President's Shoulder*, and *Jimmie Rogers: The Blue Yodeler*. Film and TV credits include *Malcom X*, *Fringe*, and *Unchained Memories* on HBO. McGruder performed in *Conjur Woman* in Rome and with the world tour of *Einstein on the Beach*. He plays harmonica and has performed at Carnegie Hall. He is a member of Actor's Equity. He dedicates his performance to his long time friend Marty Rowe: actress, director, inspiration.



**VANESSA MILLS** has a B.A. in theatre performance, and some of her favorite roles include Christine Daae (*Phantom of the Opera*), Cathy Hiatt (*The Last Five Years*), Luisa (*The Fantasticks*), and Alice (*Closer*).



**THOM MOORE** has performed with Virginia Tech, Busch Gardens, Virginia Stage Company-Norfolk, Colonial Williamsburg, the Barksdale-Richmond, and Hollins University, where he appeared in *Into the Woods*, *Caroline or Change*, and *Violet*. He received his M.F.A. in acting from V.C.U. Moore writes music for the banjo and recently recorded an album, *That Evening Sun*, with banjo, mandolin, guitar, and string quartet.



**ERICA MUSYT** is a Roanoke native with credits from Mill Mountain Theatre, including *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Pied Piper*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and Centerpieces. Musyt has a B.A. in theatre from George Mason University. While living in Los Angeles, she worked on the television series *Swingtown* and films such as *Knocked Up*, *You Me and Dupree*, and *Spider-Man 3*.



**MIKAYLA PARKER**'s recent credits are as Alice in Mill Mountain Theatre's *Alice* and ensemble roles in MMT's *Aesop's Fables*, *Beauty and the Beast JR*, and *Wizard of Oz*. She was also in Roanoke Children Theatre's *Rapunzel* and Attic Production's *Mary Poppins*. Parker loves acting, singing, dancing, and art.



**CHARLOTTE PEARL** is in middle school at RVCS. She was most recently seen in *Mary Poppins* at Attic Productions. Pearl is a Mill Mountain Theatre Conservatory student and has enjoyed roles in plays such as *Aesop's Fables* and *Shel's World*.



**PATRICK REGAL** just finished his first year at California State University-Fresno as a theatre arts major. Some of his acting credits include *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Frog Prince*, *Really Really* (KCACTF Irene Ryan Nomination), *Legally Blonde: The Musical*, and the world premiere adaptation of *Blue Willow* in which he originated the role of Janey's Dad.

**SHANE STRAWBRIDGE** is an M.F.A. candidate in the Playwright's Lab at Hollins University. He was recently recognized as one of DFW's best actors by CBS-DFW and was named the first runner-up in the Southwest Playwriting Competition at Stage West. Strawbridge is a member of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America, Equity Membership Candidate Program, and the Dramatists Guild.

**BAYLA SUSSMAN** is the owner of Baylee's Best Chocolates in Roanoke. She has performed in musicals, Shakespeare, comedies and dramas, industrials, and as a voice talent. She performed at Long Wharf, Candlewood, Organic Theatre, in Free Shakespeare, and in musicals around the Chicago area. Sussman spent two-and-a-half years of her life waving her wand as the Blue Fairy in *Pinocchio* at several children's theatres.

**AMI TROWELL** is a graduate student in the M.A.L.S. program at Hollins. She is the creative director of Big Lick Conspiracy, Roanoke's only professional improvisation troupe. Trowell has been seen on and behind the scenes in shows at Mill Mountain Theatre, Off the Rails, VWCC Theatre, and Roanoke Children's Theatre. She is a regular on the TV show *Tuned Out* and cohost on *BP and Ami*.

## Star Trail Featured Performers

**RICK BLUNT** (*Starry Starry Shakespeare*) bio and photo found with Main Stage Performers.

**GINNA HOBEN** (*Starry Starry Shakespeare*) is an actor/writer residing in Astoria, New York. Twice in the last year, she performed in her self-written play, *No Spring Chicken*, as well as in five classical plays in rotating repertory at American Shakespeare Center. Writing credits include *The Twelve Dates of Christmas* (39 productions worldwide), *Pierced!* (New York and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals), *The Wind-Chill Factor*, the 10-minute play *Telephone* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), and the Emmy-nominated TV show *Brain Games*.

**JARED SINGER** (*Star Slam Poetry*) is an audio engineer and poet living in Brooklyn. He has represented New York eight times at the national slam level, including two final stage appearances at the National Poetry Slam and one at the Individual



World Poetry Slam. His work has appeared in *Union Square Lit Mag*, *The Careless Embrace of the Boneshaker*, *The Huffington Post*, and *The Washington Post*.

## Creative Company

**DAVID CALDWELL** (*Music Director*) was music director at Mill Mountain Theatre from 1986 to 1997, and also served as music director off Broadway for *Forbidden Broadway* from 2004 to 2014. He composed music and lyrics for *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* and *Uh-Oh Here Comes Christmas*, both based on the writing of Robert Fulghum. He also composed music for Fulghum's novel *Third Wish*. Recently he composed music for *Gotta Getta Girl*, with lyrics by Peter Charles Morris. He conducted the American premiere of Stephen Schwartz's *Children of Eden*. He recently music-directed *Murder For Two* off Broadway, as well as two shows in China, with Inner Mongolian authors and casts. He is interviewed at length in Oliver Sacks' book about music and the brain, *Musophilia*.

**ANN COURTNEY** (*Lighting Designer*) teaches lighting design at Hollins and has served as lighting designer for *Goodnight Moon*, *Almost, Maine*, *Belloq's Ophelia*, *A Woman of Independent Means*, *Helvetica*, *An Initial Condition*, *Coupler*, and *Adverse Effects*. She is the resident lighting designer for the Rockbridge Ballet and Halestone Dance Studio in Lexington and an adjunct professor and guest designer for Washington and Lee University. Courtney earned her B.A. from Fordham University and her M.F.A. from the University of South Carolina.

**JOHN FORSMAN** (*Scenic Design/Technical Director*) is the technical director for the Hollins Theatre Institute. Hailing from Omaha, Nebraska, he earned a B.F.A. in technical theatre from Nebraska Wesleyan University and an M.F.A. in technical direction from the University of Virginia. He worked as the assistant technical director for the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and as stage crew supervisor at the Santa Fe Opera in New Mexico.

**JULIE LINDSEY HUNSAKER** (*Costume Designer*) has worked in costume design, casting, locations, and set decoration for theatre, television, and movies. She is an entrepreneur who has opened, owned, and operated businesses including Upper Cut, Jezebels, the National Acquirer, and the beloved Grandin Theatre. Hunsaker served as costume designer at Hollins for *These Shining Lives*, *Nine*, *Good Ol' Girls*, and *Distracted*.

**SHELBY TAYLOR LOVE** (*Stage Manager*) has been a stage manager for almost 10 years. She has worked at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Mill Mountain Theatre, ArtsPower National Touring Theatre, Barnstormers Theatre, Sundance Institute's Theatre Lab, FringeNYC, New York Musical Theatre Festival, and the Irish Repertory Theatre. In addition, Love has taught stage management at Mill Mountain Theatre Conservatory and Hollins University.

**SUSANNA YOUNG** (*Associate Director*) is a choreographer, director, and performer. She recently relocated to Virginia from Los Angeles. Young returned to her alma mater, Hollins University, to serve as choreographer and associate director for *Little Women: The Broadway Musical* and *Distracted*. Performances include Eddie Harknell in the award-winning play *Decision Height* by Meredith Levy and the Angel in Jeff Goode's *Christmas 2* with Skypilot Theater Company.

# Star Staff

Codirectors: **Katherine Fralin, Ernie Zulia** (Hollins University)

Administrative Director: **Anna Goodwin** (Hollins University)

Project Manager: **Jeannie Keen**

Project Advisors: **Susan Jennings** (City of Roanoke), **Chris Morrill** (City of Roanoke)

Assistant Administrative Director: **Emma Sperka** (Hollins University)

Event/Production Assistant: **Elizabeth Hedrick** (Hollins University)

Star Trail Director: **Beth Deel**

Satellite Stage Directors: **Michael Mansfield, Rachel Sailer**

Marketing Committee: **Michelle Bennett, Jeff Hodges** (Hollins University),

**Jean Holzinger** (Hollins University), **Timothy Martin** (City of Roanoke),

**Deborah Wright** (Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge)

Transportation Director: **Kevin Price** (Greater Roanoke Transit Company)

Volunteer Coordinators: **Kathleen Fort** (Center in the Square), **Ginger Perkins, Ann Trinkle**

Star Stories Coordinators: **Amanda Brown, Nathan Flinchum, Sheila Umberger** (Roanoke Public Libraries)

Logistics Committee: **Patrick Boas** (City of Roanoke), **Tina Workman** (Downtown Roanoke Inc.),

**Ginger Poole** (Mill Mountain Theatre), **Chris Powell** (Hollins University)

Dramaturg: **Kevin Ferguson** (Hollins University)

Videographer: **Jim Crawford**

## Production Team

Technical Director: **John Forsman** (Hollins University)

Lighting Designer: **Ann Courtney** (Hollins University)

Costume Designers: **Julie Lindsey Hunsaker** (Hollins University), **Lee Hunsaker**

Stage Manager: **Shelby Taylor Love** (Hollins University)

Assistant Director: **Susanna Young** (Hollins University)

Technical Guru: **Reid Henion** (Stage Sound)

## SHELTER SATELLITE STAR STAGE



### **ATTIC PRODUCTIONS**, Fincastle

Attic Productions, Inc., is a 274-seat community theatre providing live, family friendly entertainment for valley residents since 1995.

#### ***GLOW***

By Nicole B. Adkins  
Directed by Katrina Yancey

#### CAST

Younger Edith – Kailee Weiman  
Older Edith – Georgia Weiman  
Christopher – Steve Aaron  
Aster – Kerry Plank

### **OFF THE RAILS THEATRE**, Roanoke

Off the Rails is a dynamic community theatre known for its daring productions of cutting-edge plays.

#### ***LAST WISH***

By Wendy Marie Martin  
Directed by Miriam Frazier

#### CAST

Noel – Amanda Cash  
Agnes – Vickie Haynie



### **SHOWTIMERS COMMUNITY THEATRE**, Roanoke

Showtimers is an all volunteer organization that has been providing quality theatrical productions in the Roanoke Valley since 1951.

#### ***THE MATCH***

By David Schwingle  
Director Chip Addison  
Assistant Director Traci Addison

#### ***POLARIS***

By Paul Sambol  
Director Chip Addison  
Assistant Director Traci Addison

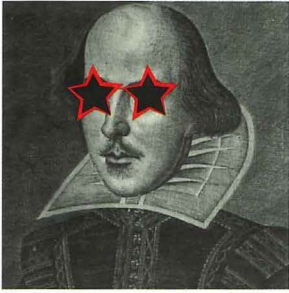
#### CAST

Joyce – Linsee Lewis  
Bob – Ben Sherman

#### CAST

Denise – Carolyn Ziegler  
George – Greg Spickard

## OVERLOOK SATELLITE STAR STAGE



### Starry Starry Shakespeare

Ginna Hoben and Rick Blunt, former company members from the American Shakespeare Center, will delight you with passages from Shakespeare's star-studded plays, including *Romeo and Juliet*, the original "star-crossed lovers."

### Star Slam Poetry

Slam poetry has become a national phenomenon. Native Roanoker Jared Singer has emerged as one of the most celebrated slam poets in the country! Enjoy this unique form of theatrical star-storytelling.



## BIG LICK CONSPIRACY

### Stellar-Starry Improv

**BIG LICK CONSPIRACY** [www.biglickconspiracy.com](http://www.biglickconspiracy.com)

Big Lick Conspiracy is Roanoke's professional improvisation troupe which has been performing at venues throughout the Roanoke Valley for over 10 years. The current cast has a monthly show at Corned Beef and Company, where you can see fast-paced and funny shows made up on the spot using audience suggestions.

## ROCKS SATELLITE STAR STAGE

**MILL MOUNTAIN CONSERVATORY** Roanoke  
[www.millmountain.org](http://www.millmountain.org)

### GINA'S DATE

By Caitlin McCommis  
Directed by Jay Briggs

### CAST

Gina – Mary Brothers



### SALEM HIGH SCHOOL Salem

Salem High School offers three levels of drama classes and a vibrant extracurricular program of plays and musicals.

### OOPS

By Meredith Dayna Levy  
Directed by Rachel Sailer

### CAST

Ferguson -- Ben Galbreath  
Martin -- Sierra Boynton  
Alex -- Isaac Snow  
Brittany -- Rebekah Moore  
Oops -- Garren Snow



### PATRICK HENRY HIGH SCHOOL Roanoke

Play title and cast not available at the time of printing.



# Your Starcropolis Experience

## Star Trail (5-8 p.m.)

Wander at your own pace from the star to the zoo. Sit or stand, and stay as long as you like while making stops along this magical theatrical journey. Enjoy storytellers, musicians, treetop aerialists, Shakespeareans, comedy improv, slam poetry and short Star Story plays performed by area theatre companies and high schools. Find yourself at the Galaxy Café for dinner and drinks, then visit the four-legged performers at the zoo.

## The Shelter Satellite Star Stage

Four different short Star Story plays performed in rotating rep by dynamic area community theatre companies, including Showtimers, Off the Rails Theatre, and Attic Productions.

## The Rocks Stage

Rising stars from area high schools perform short Star Story plays in rotating rep up at the rocks next to the Star.

## Overlook Satellite Star Stage

(In rotating rep every 15 minutes)

### Starry Starry Shakespeare

Ginna Hoben and Rick Blunt, former company members from the American Shakespeare Center, will delight you with passages from Shakespeare's star-studded plays, including *Romeo and Juliet*, the original "star-crossed lovers."

### Star Slam Poetry

Slam poetry has become a national phenomenon. Native Roanoker Jared Singer has emerged as one of the most celebrated slam poets in the country. Enjoy Singer's poetic take on the star through this unique form of theatrical star-storytelling.

### Stellar-Starry Improv

Big Lick Conspiracy, Roanoke's own comedy improv troupe, will "take the offer" and create spontaneous star stories and other stellar shenanigans for your entertainment.

## Star Bursts Along the Trail

### Star Trail Storytellers

Storytellers await you beneath the lampposts along the Star Trail to share real-life tales and tidbits related to the star.

### Dancing in the Stars...and Trees

Sabrina Woods brings her aerial silk ballet to the treetops of Mill Mountain.

### Random Acts of Dance

Spot the improv dancers dressed in white who will be floating like stardust on the mountaintop, bringing informal movement and energy to the spirit of Starcropolis.

### "Starry Corp" Star Story Depository

Stop by to record your Star Story, or deposit your written story into the Star Story archive, managed by staff members from the Roanoke Public Libraries. Meet special guests, including Bob Kinsey, who threw the switch the first time the star was lit in 1949.

### **The Davis H. Elliot Galaxy Café**

Enjoy a sumptuous Southwest Virginia picnic dinner created by Blue Ridge Catering featuring BBQ or fried chicken. Vegetarian option available. Dinner ticket \$20 (\$15 in advance). A cash bar will offer beer, wine and soft drinks throughout the evening. (All alcoholic beverages must stay in the café area and may not be carried past the Fishburn Main Stage or to the zoo.)

### **Mill Mountain Zoo**

Enjoy the four-legged performers who will welcome you at the Mill Mountain Zoo throughout the evening. Your Starcropolis pass is your admission to their zoological dance... the same one they present every day on the mountaintop.

### **Lemonade**

It's a tradition! Enjoy a glass of fresh lemonade—the same brew that was served before every performance on the veranda of the old Rockledge Inn, home of Mill Mountain Summer Stock Playhouse.

### **Starry-okee**

After the main event, adventurous star-revelers will be invited to join Stellar Starry-okee singers as they work through the list of everyone's favorite star songs, including "Stardust," "Star Man," "Vincent (Starry Starry Night)," and "When you Wish Upon a Star."

## **The Fishburn Main Stage: *Star Stories...If the Star Could Talk!* (8:30 p.m., doors open at 8 p.m.)**

Everyone has a Star Story to share... yours or someone else's. If you hang out at the star overlook long enough, you may overhear or witness real-life comedies and dramas taking place anytime of the day or night.

Writers from the Playwright's Lab at Hollins University, along with celebrity guest authors and playwrights, have created short plays and monologues based on these stories, and set at our beloved star. Some are true, and some not so true, but they truly reflect who we are and celebrate what it means to be connected to this place and each other.

Star Stories...If the Star Could Talk! is produced by the Hollins Theatre Institute, and performed by a company of our region's finest actors, along with professional guest artists from Los Angeles and New York. Together, these artists have worked to create a reflection of who we are here in the Roanoke Valley: our dreams and foibles, sorrows and joys.

# **TURN PAGE FOR EVENT MAP**







Mill Mountain Spur

Random  
of Dan

Restrooms

Shelter  
Satellite  
Star Stage

TROLLEY STOP  
T

Arrival  
Station

MAIN BOX OFFICE

Star Trail

The Rocks  
Stage

Theatrical  
Aerial Dancer

Lemonade

The Star



Mill Mountain Zoo



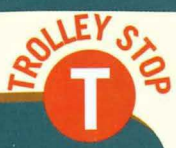
Old Road

Prospect Rd



Prospect Rd SE

Trolley Departure



Event Office Volunteer Center



Restrooms



Galaxy Café

Galaxy Picnic Lounge

Star Story Depository (Starry Corp)

Fishburn Main Stage



Overlook Satellite Star Stage

Trail Storytellers

Prospect Rd SE

## After 40 Years Theatre Returns To Mill Mountain



**The Starcropolis Fishburn Main Stage tent** is erected on the "sacred spot" where Mill Mountain Playhouse once operated in the historic Rockledge Inn. Every summer from 1964 to 1976, audiences would drive up the mountain, take in the beautiful view, enjoy a lemonade on the veranda, and share in the delight of live theatre. Not only was it a special occasion to go to the playhouse, but for many, it was also a tradition they shared with family, friends, and fellow community members. Live theatre became more than a delightful distraction from the heat of the summer; it was a galvanizing experience that brought citizens of the Roanoke Valley together, at the highest point in the city, reminding them they lived in a very special place, among terrific people.

The Rockledge Inn was built in 1892 and was a popular resort destination for decades. It had a

brush with a wildfire in 1939, and never seemed to regain its original luster. It was abandoned in the late 1950s and sat vacant until it was given new life as a magical destination for live theatre.

In 1964, a group of enthusiastic thespians launched an ambitious season of one-week summer stock in the vacant Inn. Opening with Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*, they followed with *Our Town* plus eight more plays and musicals: every week a different play. Two years later, David Huddleston, born and raised in the area, was hired to transform the playhouse into an Equity professional theatre. Huddleston was living and working in New York at the time and later went on to a very successful career as a character actor in Hollywood and on Broadway. The playhouse ran as an Equity summer stock theatre through 1969.

While still teaching at Hollins College, Jim Ayers was hired to serve as the business manager, but the endeavor proved fiscally impossible. The size of the house (approximately 225 seats) could not support an equity budget, and even though he tried everything in his power to control costs, the doors closed at the end of 1969. Betty Carr Muse, a passionate board member, called Ayers saying she couldn't bear to see the theatre go dark and would come up with some funding if he could get something—anything—on the stage for the 1970 summer season, even if it was dancing bears!

Ayers took her challenge and, deciding against dancing bears, formed the first Mill Mountain Youth Ensemble, composed primarily of Hollins students. Along with Rachel Lampert, who taught dance at Hollins, he staged a production of *The Marriage on the Eiffel Tower* by avant garde artist Jean Cocteau. This very unlikely summer stock fare sold out all performances, and he credited its success to the youthful spirit of the company, the beautiful view from the mountain, and the unique atmosphere of the times. After that summer, the playhouse was incorporated as a not-for-profit, nonequity theatre, and Ayers was hired as the artistic director. He continued teaching at Hollins while producing four productions at the playhouse every summer through 1976. He was joined by a rag-tag group of passionate colleagues that included Jere Hodgkin, Ernie Zulia, Biff Baron, Rob Fisher, Ed Sala, Doug Flinchum, and Laban Johnson.

They all considered it a great tragedy when the theatre burned in the fall of 1976. It was the end of an era. Like a phoenix rising, the playhouse moved to a new location at the Grandin Theatre from 1977 to 1983 and although it was a welcoming home, everyone missed the magical setting of the mountain.

No one could have imagined that the burning of the playhouse actually helped propel Mill Mountain Theatre and the city of Roanoke into a new era. Passionate community leaders, including Robert and Sibyl Fishburn, Warner Dalhouse, and David Goode, believed theatre and all the

arts were crucial to the quality of life in our community, and banded together shortly after the fire to begin plans for an arts complex on the city market. Center in the Square would not only provide a new home for Mill Mountain Theatre, but would also begin the revitalization that would transform downtown Roanoke into the dynamic community center and tourist destination it has become. Out of tragedy came great triumph. Center in the Square has been the home of Mill Mountain Theatre since 1984. Under the dynamic artistic leadership of Jere Lee Hodgkin for more than two decades, along with Patrick Benton and now Ginger Poole, who has led the theatre's remarkable rebirth, MMT has become a major theatrical force recognized for excellence and innovation throughout the United States. But although no permanent structure remains, it's nice to know the foundation will always remain here, on top of Mill Mountain.

—Ernie Zulia



# The Star: A History

The Roanoke Star (or Mill Mountain Star) is the largest man-made illuminated star in the world. Previously known as the Magic City, due to a building boom in which houses and businesses just seemed to appear, Roanoke became known as the Star City of the South (or just the Star City) soon after the star was first lit on November 23, 1949. The Roy C. Kinsey Sign Company designed and erected the star, and Roanoke Iron and Bridge Works designed the steel structure. The star sits on a structure over 100 feet tall and has 2,000 feet of neon tubing. To ground the star, cable from the (then) recently scrapped trolley system was buried beneath it.

Along with the star erected on Mill Mountain, a number of smaller stars were created to hang from lampposts in downtown Roanoke. On the evening of November 23 at 8:22 p.m., Mayor A. R. Minton threw a ceremonial switch to light the mountain star.

Hidden away, Roy C. Kinsey's son Bob flipped the actual switch. The ceremony was attended by actor John Payne and was reported by multiple national radio networks. *Life* magazine ran a photo layout of the star in December 1949, and the *Today* show hosted an episode there in 1958.

The Roanoke Merchants' Association erected the star originally as a Christmas decoration and draw for downtown Roanoke businesses. However, the citizens of Roanoke liked it so much that the star has remained lit most nights from December 30, 1949, to the present day. In that time the star has changed colors or been left off for significant events, from traffic fatalities to the attacks of 9/11. The smaller stars were decommissioned or sold to other localities for use as holiday decorations, and some have since ended up in private homes and local museums.

—Nathan Flinchum, Roanoke Public Libraries



Over 40 plays were submitted by writers from Hollins and across the country. Not all could be presented on stage, so we wanted to share one as an example of the fine work that may appear in future Starcropolis productions.

## REUNION

### A Play By Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey



**ELIZABETH "BETSY" FORSYTHE HAILEY** (Hollins class of 1960) is a critically acclaimed playwright and author of best-selling novels, including *A Woman of Independent Means*, which examine the changing roles of women in society. The novel was made into a popular NBC mini series starring Sally Field. With her late husband, she collaborated on several television series, including *McMillan and Wife*, *Love of Life*, and *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*. She served as writer-in-residence at Hollins in 1998, and she has twice spoken at Founder's Day and commencement.

Open on the star grounds as the sun is setting. In the background we hear a recorded version of the Hollins choir singing "Lift Thine Eyes," which fades into the voice of a woman humming the melody.

Two women, early 40s, enter. One, LILY, is carrying a large tote bag. She is accompanied by her friend MONA. They stop at a bench, look around, seem to come to a decision. LILY sits, opens the tote bag, rests her hand on something inside. MONA stands behind her, puts her hands on Lily's shoulders. LILY leans back against her, closes her eyes, comforted.

LILY

This is harder than I thought.  
(beat)  
Thank you for coming with me.

MONA

I loved him too, you know.

LILY

I know. And so did he.

MONA

Do you want to talk about him?

LILY

Not yet.

MONA

I'm sorry we didn't see more of each other over the years. But the company was always moving us.

LILY

And Gordon had no interest in traveling to Tunisia or Saudi Arabia or Australia.

MONA

We were hostages of the oil business for most of our marriage. Thank God Jean Paul decided to take early retirement.

LILY

If only Gordon had, he might still be alive today.

MONA

But still the two of you saw a lot more of the world than we did. All those trips you took! I often think of the irony: I wouldn't marry Gordon because I wanted to live abroad and travel the world. You were quite happy to stay at home here in Roanoke.

LILY

With Gordon. Once you went running back to Paris ...

MONA

To Jean Paul.

LILY

To Paris. To France. To adventure. Tell me, would you have given Jean Paul a second look if you'd met him in Texas?

MONA

(a pause)

Where there were plenty of oilmen I could've

married ...

*(laughs at the irony)*

No, probably not. I didn't even like going home to Texas for holidays. I certainly couldn't imagine spending my life there.

LILY

Well I'm sure glad you came east to college. I think we're the only ones in our class who roomed together all four years.

MONA

*(leaning down to give her a hug, then walking away to look out at the view)*

I hope Madeleine is as happy here these next four years as I was.

LILY

She seems as excited to be here as we were when we arrived in Paris 20 years ago.

MONA

To be honest, I'm very relieved she's here. Europe is in a state of high anxiety these days. But just knowing she's safe here in the Blue Ridge Mountains ...

*(she walks to another viewing point)*

I can breathe a bit easier.

*(pause)*

Funny. I always imagined that once Jean Paul retired, we'd start traveling, finally be able to see some of the places we were never able to visit when he was working. But now he just wants to settle down and live full time in our summer place in Provence. That's where he is today, getting the house ready for the winter.

LILY

Are you disappointed?

MONA

*(coming back to the bench, sitting down beside Lily)*

Actually, to my amazement, I'm looking forward to it. Finally being able to spend our days together – mornings and afternoons as well as evenings. I'm still in love with him, thank God.

LILY

I'm happy for you.

MONA

Remember how ambitious I used to be?

LILY

A woman of the world! That's what you always said you wanted to be.

MONA

And I was willing to take any kind of job to that end.

LILY

Starting with marriage to a Frenchman.

MONA

Starting ... and ending.

*(Lily gives her a puzzled look)*

I devoted myself to becoming a model French wife. Learning the language till I could follow the conversation, then taking courses so I'd have something to say.

MONA

Madeleine has always kept her feelings very much to herself. I couldn't tell what she was thinking as we toured campus after campus. Until we came here.

LILY

The spoon bread may have had something to do with it.

MONA

Not to mention the crab cakes and sweet potato pie.

*(pause)*

MONA (cont)

No, it was you – and Gordon. He was so warm and affectionate, so different from French men. Just taking her in his arms like that ...

LILY

I can't believe that was just two years ago.

MONA

And after dinner we drove up here, to the Star. Do you remember?

LILY

He always loved coming here. He brought me here on our first date.

MONA

*(laughing)*

Me too.

LILY

And this is where he asked me to marry him.

*(looking at Lily)*

Go ahead. Say it.

MONA

Me too.

*(pause)*

Did he ever forgive me for abandoning him like that – with a date set for the wedding?

LILY

He was a basket case in the beginning, as you can imagine.

MONA

Unfortunately, I can. Contrary to appearance, I was not without guilt.

LILY

But I was feeling abandoned too. I'd lost my best friend – and not just my college roommate. I assumed you and Gordon would settle down in Roanoke – he was already working at the bank – and we would go right on being best friends. You and Gordon and me and whoever I ended up marrying.

MONA

I know you were angry with me at the time but I was so grateful to you for being here to help him get through it.

LILY

Were you ever really in love with Gordon?

MONA

I thought I was – he was such a lovely man – and I even tried to be again when we came home from Paris.

LILY

Tried? By becoming lovers, you mean?

MONA

Well, yes.

LILY

And bringing home to Gordon everything you learned from Jean Paul?

MONA

I never slept with Jean Paul that semester. I really thought I was saving myself for Gordon. But we did go to the movies...

Oh yes, I remember going to the movies in Paris.

MONA

Just his hand on my knee and I'd start trembling ...

LILY

I suppose I should thank you for the lessons you taught Gordon before you fled.

MONA

*(trying to keep it light)*

De rien.

LILY

*(rising)*

It's time.

MONA

Yes. My daughter should be done with the tour by now.

LILY

*(quiet, calm)*

Our daughter. Or rather Gordon's daughter. And now mine too.

MONA

*(staring at her, stunned)*

How long have you known?

LILY

Since that night two years ago when the two of you stayed with us. After we told you goodnight, Gordon disappeared into his study, saying he had work to do. After an hour or so I went to look for him. He'd fallen asleep at his desk, an old family album open in front of him. When I woke him, he just pointed to a photo. "Remind you of anyone?" "Who is it?" "My grandmother Elizabeth. She died when I was just a kid. I adored her." I kept staring at the photo.

LILY (cont)

"You see it, don't you?" he said finally. "You have to see it." And of course I did. Madeleine looks just like her. "What are we going to do about it?" I asked. "That's the miracle," he said. "We don't have to do anything. She's coming here. In two years. We'll be able to see her all the time. We'll have a daughter."

MONA

He never said a word to me.

LILY

There was no need.

MONA

But how did you feel?

LILY

Once I got over the shock – grateful. Even more so now, now that he's gone. Because he's alive in her. And always will be.

*(She reaches in her tote bag, takes out an urn, pries off the lid, begins to scatter the ashes. She holds out the urn to MONA who hesitantly reaches her hand inside and the two women together wordlessly complete their task)*

THE END





## History of Mill Mountain From "Anatomy of a Mountain"

By Beth Macy

*The Roanoke Times*

June 13, 2004

One of the first white men to lay claim to the mountain was Botetourt County Sheriff William McClanahan, who purchased most of what is now South and Southeast Roanoke at the end of the Revolutionary War. No one knows if the first-generation Irish-American enjoyed strolls up the mountain. But, not far from the mill he ran at Crystal Spring, he built a log house into the mountain's base - with portholes to guard against Indian attack.

In the late 1800s, Big Lick became Roanoke, and an entrepreneur named William Henritze bought most of the mountain in hopes of cashing in on the boomtown frenzy. Apparently even then people wanted to cart Aunt Edna up to the mountaintop on Sundays to take in the view.

In 1891, according to one newspaper account, a pair of "well-primed soiled doves from the infamous Pot Licker Flats" - a brothel area on Norfolk Avenue - picked up what may have been the mountain's first DUI when their buggy veered off the gravel road and crashed.

As the mountaintop became a showplace, Henritze built fancy homes up its sides, using stone from the mountain. He built its first paved road, now Prospect Road (also known as the Mill Mountain Greenway), with a figure-eight curve so novel that European newspapers printed photographs of it.

Henritze charged motorists 25 cents to drive up the mountain, paying his nephews to man the tollbooth. The family's gardener, Andrew Moore, slept in the tiny booth at night and rose every morning to sweep the mile-and-a-half road with a broom.

Development ideas for the mountain have abounded ever since. Henritze corresponded for a time with the developers of Mount Rushmore about his idea to chisel Robert E. Lee on the mountaintop: The idea was that tourists would pay to walk on the brim of the Confederate general's hat.

Some, such as the star (1949) and the zoo (1952), have stuck. There's still talk of bringing back a restaurant/lodge similar to the old Rockledge Inn (which operated off and on and in various forms from 1891 until it burned in 1976) and a device to ferry people up the mountain, not unlike the actual cable-car incline of 1910-29.

Meanwhile, the mountain regulars keep doing their thing. No matter what Roanoke puts on the top of its mountain, they will find a way to scale it.

According to an 1890 news account, conquering the mountain has always been a popular pastime, "requiring the exertion of a bold and active man."

## ***The Roanoke Times Cornershot*** **May 25, 2006**

Once every couple of months or so, I run into her somewhere along the ferny paths.

Nature-lover Betty Field, Mill Mountain's fiercest mama bear, has scaled its stony surface more than all but the deer and wild turkey. Years ago, she calculated, she'd already hiked enough miles on Mill to match the circumference of the Earth.

I hiked with her once -- something I don't recommend for the faint of foot. We were gone all day, and this stick-thin septuagenarian, who'd offered to pack us a lunch, made me go five full hours before she finally pulled out a half-sandwich (!) from her sack.

I spotted her near the mountaintop not long ago, her eyes zeroed in on a treetop thicket of birds.

"How are you, Betty?"

"I'm watching the ravens," she said. "I'm getting ready to take the Mill Mountain Advisory Committee on the Monument Trail hike, and I've told myself I'm not going to talk or lecture. I just want them to see the wildflowers."

How was she? She was in her usual state of holy reverence, fascinated by the start of another season and the sheer black brilliance of a common bird.

—Beth Macy

## ***The Roanoke Times Cornershot*** **April 10, 2007**

I found it on the trail just below the Mill Mountain Star one morning:

A note—the opposite of a Dear John letter—perfectly folded into an airplane, and presumably launched from the star overlook.

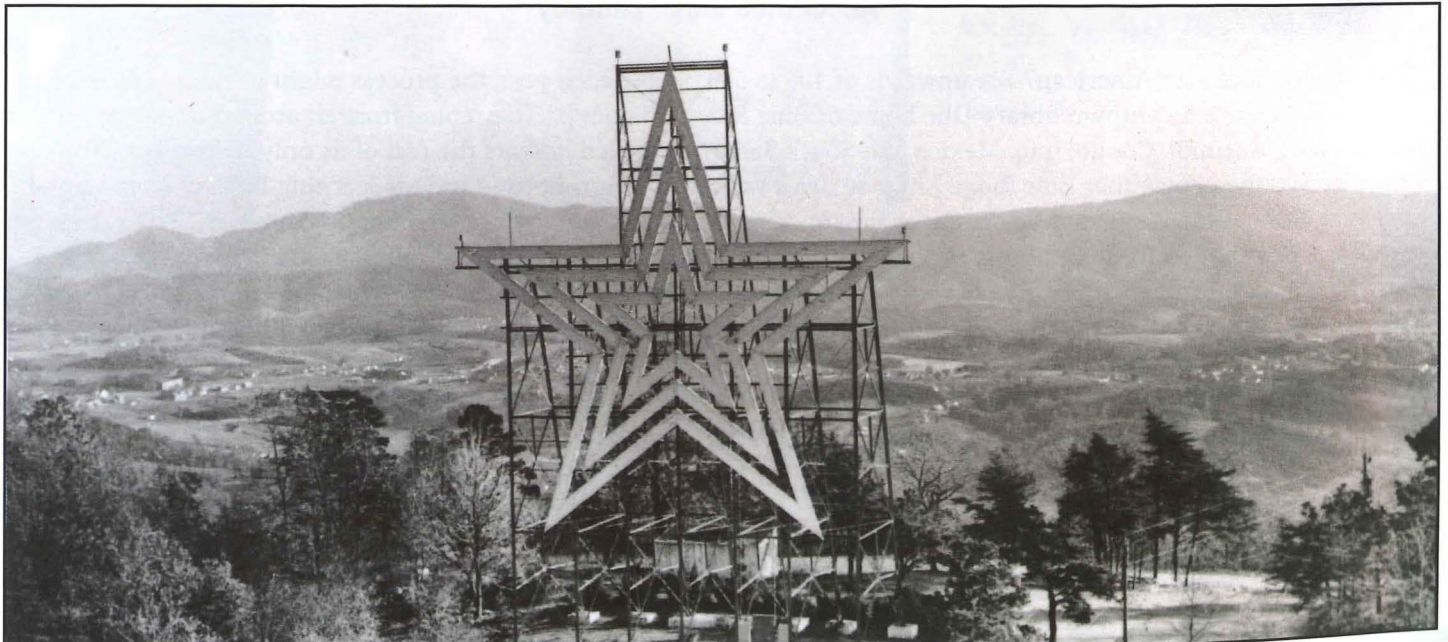
I find a lot of things on the mountain during my regular walks and bike rides: random garbage, cigarette butts, deer, blue-tailed skinks, an occasional homeless person.

But never before have I stumbled onto a piece of a cuckold's heart: "I hereby forgive [name of ex] for everything she did that made me mad over the last five years." He went on to list a trail of sins including adultery, violence, financial shenanigans, lying.

"The five years are behind me, and we are off to a new start, like we just met today ... and I will never ever say or bring up our past as long as I live."

Add this attribute to the debate over the future of Roanoke's coolest spot. Mill Mountain: a place for forgiveness.


—Beth Macy



# Roanoke's Newcomers Reflect on the Star

On July 12, 2016, 15 learners from 10 different countries took a field trip to the Roanoke Star. All are classmates at Blue Ridge Literacy, where they have come to learn English. Standing in the hot sun, they smiled, pointed at the giant star, and reflected on the beauty and personal significance of this symbol of Roanoke, their new home.

Here are just a few of the comments written later that day as part of a classroom assignment. Go to YouTube to see more. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHaMXDnbEcg>



Do you like the star?  
I like the star because it is beautiful  
Why do you like the star?  
- I like the star because it is big  
What do you think about the star?  
I think about the colors  
How do you feel when you see the star?  
I feel happy

Majuma b. Hussein

## About Blue Ridge Literacy

“How do you make an American? For upwards of 400 to 500 people each year, the process might begin in a basement room at Roanoke’s downtown library [the home of Blue Ridge Literacy]...They come from all around the globe – from Afghanistan, Burundi, Congo, Iraq, Mexico and South Sudan. They fled horrors the rest of us only read about...Today, 97 percent of the people that Blue Ridge Literacy deals with are foreign-born – and are learning English from scratch... Last year alone, Blue Ridge Literacy counted “learners,” as they are termed, from 46 different countries...Roanoke’s status as a destination for immigrants – many settled through Commonwealth Catholic Charities – has been well-known for years, through successive waves of foreign convulsions. The Vietnamese boat people of the ’70s and ’80s. The refugees from the Balkans in the ’90s. More recently, refugees from parts of Africa and the Mideast. Typically, Catholic Charities gets them settled in housing, teaches them bus routes – and connects them to Blue Ridge Literacy to learn English...English is a hard language to learn because it doesn’t follow the normal rules that most other languages follow. Yet, contrary to what some may think, immigrants do learn it.”

Excerpts from *The Roanoke Times*, June 5, 2016

For more information: [blueridgeliteracy.org](http://blueridgeliteracy.org)



NASIMA

I went to star before  
 we are had a good time  
 we are eat some food  
 star is very Biotech!



ching

I like the star because it  
 is special to Roanoke, I  
 think it is beautiful  
 feel at home when  
 I see the star.

Star is a symbol

It is very special place in Roanoke  
 because of that their other name of  
 Roanoke is star city there is very  
 higher and very beautiful place.  
 specially for picnic there has picnic  
 table big ground water fountain people  
 come for visit star from another state  
 or another country I like to go some time  
 there

# HOLLINS UNIVERSITY



*Dodtransbicentennial, doctransbicentennial,  
septaquintagunquecentennial,  
quartoseptcentennial...*

Scholars may debate the appropriate Latin term for a 175th anniversary. But by any name, Hollins University has reason to celebrate during its 2016-17 academic year as the school commemorates 175 years of preparing students for lives of active learning, fulfilling work, personal growth, achievement, and service to society. Starcropolis is part of a yearlong series of activities that honors Hollins' rich history, and everyone is warmly invited to join in the festivities.



Hollins traces its roots to a young mathematics professor named Charles Lewis Cocke, who was committed to offering young women the same rigorous education afforded to young men. From the school's founding in 1842, Hollins has evolved into the small university it is today, continuing to offer a rigorous liberal arts education to women in a nondenominational setting complemented by eight coed graduate programs. During the course of 175 years, the opportunities extended to Hollins students have prepared them well for an ever-changing world.

Hollins has flourished and remained strong over the years. Through the Great Depression, two World Wars, significant societal change, and contemporary challenges, Hollins has always found a way not only to endure, but also to thrive.

At the same time, Hollins has enjoyed the privilege of playing an important role in the cultural life of the Roanoke Valley. The university has proudly served as an educator, an employer, and as a venue for a wide range of programs that both enlighten and entertain. Hollins is delighted to welcome the community at large to campus, whether it's to take in one of the exceptional productions staged by the Hollins Theatre Institute; check out world-class exhibitions at the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum; experience concert recitals by renowned

classical vocalists and musicians; hear nationally and internationally acclaimed authors read from their works; or attend lectures by such luminaries as Bill Bryson and Jane Goodall.

Please visit Hollins' 175th anniversary webpage, [www.hollins.edu/175](http://www.hollins.edu/175), for news, special events, and other information related to the celebration. The webpage includes a list of distinguished alumnae/i and their accomplishments, along with 175 moments in Hollins history.



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**White Christmas**  
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**Holiday  
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