

If you have never had the chance to meet a published author, here is your chance. The authors for the 2025 eleventh Berkshire Blueberry & Book Festival fundraiser are comprised of several of our prolific past favorites, as well as several new comer that we are happy to welcome.

One of our new local author is **Mary Petronio Collins**. She is a registered nurse who works as a triage nurse in two nearby Primary Care offices. She lives in Newark Valley and in 2024 was excited to have her first children's book published! *I Miss You A Ton- A Young Girl's Struggle With Her Parents' Divorce* is based on her and her now grown children's actual circumstances. Divorce is difficult for all involved, and she wants children to know that they are not alone in their sadness and confusion.

Mary is working on other books based on her family's past. Her themes mainly focus on challenging situations such as dealing with a loved one suffering from dementia and having to face terminal illness. She wants to ease the stress and fear that these issues can cause younger readers. But not all her projects are so serious! Mary is also writing a lighthearted story encompassing sweet interactions between her father and herself as a child.

Mary will be doing book readings, book signings, having raffles featuring local businesses, and of course will have copies of her book for sale. Stop by her booth for a small treat or just to chat. She looks forward to meeting you!

We also welcome **Darcy Branwyn** this year. Darcy lives in New York State with her husband and “too many cats.” She has been writing since she could make words on paper, starting with poetry as a child then short stories. By the time she had finished high school she was working on her first novel.

Today she writes and publishes historical romance and werewolf/vampire romance for adults. She is published under different names over the years but her current incarnation is Darcy Branwyn, named after characters from her previous novels.

Our third newcomer is **Amber Gregory**. She is the author of *"Little Sweetheart: How I Healed from Sexual Abuse—and How You Can Too."* She is not only an accomplished writer but also a captivating public speaker. Her passion lies in addressing critical topics such as Grooming and the Cycle of Narcissistic Abuse to prevent child sexual abuse by trusted adults.

Her prevention workshop delivers impactful presentations to church

leaders, in libraries, public spaces, and as continuing education classes for school and team development groups.

"Little Sweetheart," her first book, is a powerful personal story addressing child sexual abuse. Amber's second book, *"Learning to be Loved: Relighting the Spark in a Child's Soul"* narrates the challenges of raising a child with severe and early trauma. Additionally, she is currently working on her third book, *"Trauma Informed Parenting."*

Amber's past year was marked by notable achievements. As a co-collaborator at the Wild Goose Festival, she made her debut and was honored to deliver a healing experience at Convoy Hall. Amidst book signings and in-person presentations, she finalized the recording of her prevention workshop series and launched her YouTube and TikTok channels. Amber hopes to prevent child sexual abuse by education trusted adults on what to look for in the early stages of grooming.

Our final newcomer is Angela Smith. She has working at Cornell University for the past 35 years, and she has been lucky enough to travel the world visiting Mexico, India, Russia, Philippines, Myanmar, Uganda, Morocco, and Italy. Each place has its fond memories and unique places that I would love to visit again.

She has been a *Stampin' Up* demonstrator for the past 8 years. "I've enjoyed the creativity of crafting with stamps. Creating cards, treat boxes, bags, flowers and more. Demonstrating has allowed me to share my love of stamping with others, showing them new techniques, new project ideas, and encouraging them to find their own creative side."

She and Bartt, her husband of 39 years, have been lucky to have their children and granddaughter close by, enabling them to spend lots of family time together. She and Bartt love to get out to see and do new things and try to find time to take our travel trailer on the road.

Fortunately for all of us festival-goers, Charles Yapple will be returning to our festival this year. After retiring from teaching environmental and outdoor education courses for 46 years at SUNY Cortland, Richford native Charles Yapple, has authored three books: *Foxey Brown: An Adirondack Outlaw, Hermit, and Guide... (2011), Jacob's Land: Revolutionary War Soldiers,*

Schemers, Scoundrels, and the Settling of New York's Frontier (2016), and *The 'Tree' of Us: Richford Boys Who Changed the World and What They Left Behind* (July 2023). His latest work, *The 'Tree' of Us*, which “follows the lives of three men, from Richford, New York, who changed the world. The course of each life is instructive, he notes, particularly to readers seeking a measure of happiness and a wish to leave behind a planet enabling others the same opportunity.

Another of our favorites is the award-winning author, Carol Henry. She is a travel writer, local photo/journalist, and the NYS Historian for the Town and Village of Candor. Her light romantic suspense adventures “Connection Series” are described as “Indiana Jones meets Romancing the Stone,” and reflect her own travels to various international locations.” Her other novels repertoire includes American historical, holiday, and contemporary light romance novels. She has written several books on the history of the area, as well as an historical novel, *Ribbons of Steel*, with Candor history woven into it. At the festival, Carol will be featuring her *Family Favorites Cookbook* with several generations of family favorites and her latest release *Arctic Connection*, as well as her other works. Visit her website at www.carolhenry.org and checkout some of these out: [Destination: Romance—Exotic Romantic Suspense Adventures](#).

Love A la Carte: #1 Best Short Romance, 2023, Critter's Reader's Poll

Fruitcake Nut Bars Dilemma: #1 Best Short Romance, 2022 Critter's Reader's Poll

Linzer Tarts and Broken Hearts: #1 Best Short Romance, 2021 Critter's Reader's Poll

Ciara's Homecoming Christmas: #1 Best Short Romance, 2019 Critter's Reader's Poll

Nora's Redemption: #2 Best Romance Novel, 2019 Critter's Reader's Poll

Cairo Connection: #2 Best Romance Novel 2018 Predators and Editor's Reader's Poll

Nothing Short of a Miracle: #1 Best Seller Amazon Encore Holiday R

Additionally Christian writer and poet, Lisa Belknap is also rejoining us this year. Lisa seeks to encourage her readers with the message of everlasting love from a loving and gracious Creator.

In October 2024, Lisa published *The Long Skip Home*, a Christian middle-grade fantasy debut novel. One reviewer wrote: “Lisa Belknap leads

readers into the world of Whule, where journeyer Lily Lightfoot learns compassion for the lost, the beauty of overlooking offenses, and the fruits of the Spirit needed to endure the long skip home. This story beautifully points us to words spoken by Jesus: "He who has ears, let him hear." – Amazon Review

Lisa also loves to write poetry, and in regards to her poetry collection *Seasons of Love: Woodland Poems of God's Love*, another reviewer wrote: "What a truly touching book of poetry, beautifully illustrated by the author. Lisa Belknap gives the reader lovely pathways into her heart and soul. Those pathways begin and end with her Savior. This is a treasure I will keep beside my bed." –Amazon Review

Of her poetry collection *Unto Us: A Christmas Poetry Book*, another reviewer wrote: "The author's love of God and family are evident in each beautiful and varied poem. Great to read during Advent to prepare for Christmas and to give as an inspiring gift." –Amazon Review.

Take an opportunity to talk with Cortland area author Lisa Belknap at the festival and have your book copy signed with a special message.

After 35 years in engineering, returning author, Lenora Riegel spends her time writing and drawing her 'Finger Lakes Tales' for children, where she exemplifies coping skills, mindfulness, authenticity, bravery, and a growth mindset. She feels reading together helps children deal with stress and anxiety. Pepper, in *Pepper the Salt Potato*, learns to accept himself for who he is. In *Quaver Has a Feeling*, Quaver explores his emotions through music in a collaboration with Binghamton Philharmonic's Wallenberg Legacy Project. *Stuffie Sleepover at the Library* was done in collaboration with her 5-year-old grandson. He picked the topic, and they worked together! Her latest venture is a collaboration with Randi Mahomes and Teresa Jane called *Play Together*, which is a story about faith, friends, and fun. You can check out all her picture books as well as her two middle grade novels at the Blueberry and Books Festival or siphrebooks.com.

And finally, our festival would not feel complete without our home-grown author Pamela Morris. For a 6th year, Pamela Morris, a Berkshire native, will be appearing at the Blueberry and Book Festival with a little something for everyone. Another new title, *Hunting Quincey*, inspired by her love of vampires and all things Dracula, has been added to her Horror

line-up. She also offers a series of Tioga County-inspired titles in the Paranormal Murder-Mystery genre and a collection of twisted short-story fairy tales.

Despite loving all things creepy and spooky, Pamela does have a silly and more colorful side. She also writes and illustrates children's books featuring the many adventures of *Bill The Worm* and his friends! Rumor has it that pet worms will be on hand awaiting adoption.

Along with various works of fiction, reprints of Pamela's original artwork will be for sale and a little something she's calling '*Cackles & Caws*' to her booth. You will have to stop by to find out what that is all about! All her titles will be available at the event.