NEW RIVER PRESENTS LECTURE SERIES ON THE GREAT UNKNOWNS: DISCOVERING WEST VIRGINIA’S AUTHORS

[Lewisburg, WV] West Virginia has produced award-winning and talented writers who have inspired and entertained millions of readers around the world. Author Belinda Anderson will explore the lives and works of some of these authors during a four-week lecture series, *The Great Unknowns: Discovering West Virginia’s Authors*. The series will include discussions of Tom Kromer, W.E. Blackhurst and Pearl S. Buck. The final class will be dedicated to an overview of contemporary West Virginia authors.

The series, sponsored by New River Community and Technical College, will meet on Thursdays, beginning April 22 at 6 p.m. in the auditorium of Greenbrier Hall on the Greenbrier Valley Campus in Lewisburg, WV.

"I'm really excited about sharing the discoveries I've made about West Virginia's literary heritage," Anderson says of her latest community education offering through New River.

Huntington resident Tom Kromer's novel *Waiting for Nothing* is a searing portrayal of the Great Depression, yet few people have ever heard of this author. “When those attending the class hear the story of his life,” Anderson declares, “they will be doubly fascinated by his book.”

Most readers connect Nobel Prize winner Pearl S. Buck with China, but she was born in Pocahontas County, and that background influenced her writing. Anderson will provide excerpts from *The First Wife and Other Stories* and also discuss the book set at Buck’s birthplace written under a pseudonym.

Area residents may know of W.E. Blackhurst as the author of the book that inspired
Robert Tuckwiller’s play *Riders of the Flood*. Like Pearl S. Buck, Blackhurst also wrote short stories, which will be highlighted in class. Readings will be done from Blackhurst’s *Afterglow: A Collection of Short Stories and Poems*.

Anderson shares space with Kromer, Blackhurst and Buck on the Literary Map of West Virginia, published by Fairmont State. In fact, it was the map, first published in 2004, that led her to discover Kromer and other "great unknowns." The map, which also will be discussed in class, highlights 35 authors. "These authors and their works offer samples of some of the most significant imaginative literature written by authors of the state," according to Fairmont State Press.

*The Great Unknowns* is open to the general public, students and staff. Preregistration is required by April 16. Cost of this lecture series is $95. Readings are not mandatory; however, copies of the books discussed in the class will be available at the New River GVC Library. For more information on this class or to register, contact New River Community and Technical College’s Center for Workforce Education at 304-647-6570 or 304-872-4520.

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