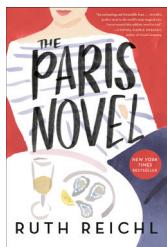


Festival of Books '24

IT'S EPIC!

The Academy holds its 19th annual celebration of books and reading.

Have you made your plans for Labor Day weekend yet? Consider spending part of it with a group of writers discussing some of the season's most exciting new books. Bring the kids: They can hang out with The Very Hungry Caterpillar. And while you're there, stroll through one of the biggest used book sales in the region.

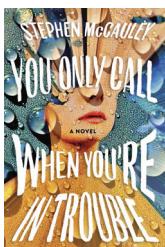


All this and more at the Academy's 19th annual Festival of Books, which runs from Saturday, August 31, through Monday, September 2. Admission is free to all events, except for the Members Only early book-buying opportunity on Friday.

The centerpiece of the event is the giant book sale. "It's epic," promises Carl Atkins, who co-chairs the Festival with Wayne Greene and David Highfill: more than 15,000 gently used books – fiction and non-fiction, hard and soft covers – as well as CDs, DVDs and LPs, all donated by friends of the Academy and sorted and organized by a small army of volunteers captained by Greene. The Special Book Room will feature an array of curated books – on art, photography, architecture, design, cooking and other topics – and graphic novels, collectible first editions, signed books, out-of-print titles, esoterica and more.

"If I hear one thing consistently from first-time visitors," says Highfill, "it's 'I can't believe the quality and sheer number of books for sale.' So, come on down and see one of the best kept secrets for book lovers."

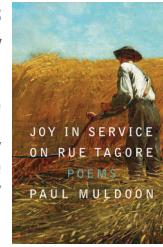
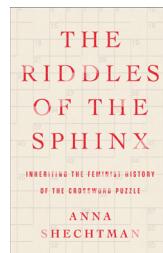
The book sale is open to the public Saturday, August 31, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, September 1, from 10:00 to 4:00 pm; and Monday, September 2 (Bargain Day) from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Teachers with ID will receive a 20% discount on their purchases (except in the Special Book Room and on guest author books).



On Friday, August 30, there will be a Members-Only Preview from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Admission is free for members and \$10 for members' guests; membership will be available online and at the door. "Browse and buy at your leisure," says Greene. "Shoppers will enjoy early access even more this year than in years past because the use of scanning devices will be prohibited on Friday."

As always, a highlight of the event will be discussions with and readings by esteemed authors. "We're very fortunate this year to have a stellar lineup," says Atkins, "including a Pulitzer Prize winning poet and this year's finalist in memoir." The program kicks off at noon on Saturday and will feature Ruth Reichl, Andrew Leland and Martin Baron. Sunday's program will include Anna Shectman, Stephen McCauley and Paul Muldoon. Authors' books will be available for purchase and signing.

On Saturday morning, kids will be able to meet and have their picture taken with The Very Hungry Caterpillar, the title character of Eric Carle's beloved picture book. There will be art activities and a reading of the classic story of a butterfly's life cycle by Chatham High School drama students.



what's coming up

Festival of Books

August 30-September 2
The Academy's weekend bookfest

Mary Gauthier

with Jaimee Harris
Thursday, September 26

9th Annual Members' Show

October 5 – November 3

Misty Blues

featuring Gina Coleman
Saturday, October 12

Embe Esti

Saturday, November 2

All Write, Columbia

nonfiction writing workshop
November 7 – 10

Small Works 2024:

Regional Fine Arts & Crafts
November 16 -December 15

Laura Anglade

and the Ben Rosenblum Trio
Saturday, December 7

spencertownacademy.org/events



Folk singer-songwriter Gauthier to perform at the Academy.

Spencertown Academy Roots & Shoots Concerts Series will present Grammy-nominated folk singer-songwriter and author Mary Gauthier with special guest Jaimee Harris on Thursday, September 26 at 7:30 pm.

"I've been a fan of Mary's moving and eloquently crafted songs for a very long time," says Wayne Greene, who co-chairs the Academy Music Committee with Michele Quigley. "It's truly a thrill to host her and her partner Jaimee, who is a remarkable singer-songwriter in her own right."

continued on Page 3

from the President's iPad

MEMO TO OUR VOLUNTEERS: YOU ROCK!

Thanks for the commitment, hard work and creativity.

Nothing we do at the Spencertown Academy can happen without the help of our volunteers. There is a small group of those volunteers that plan and direct all our activities: our board of directors. Unlike most organizations, which typically recruit board members from the outside, we look within our community, in keeping with our mission. Our board members are our neighbors. We are fortunate to have such a hands-on, creative, dedicated group. I'd like to take this opportunity to announce the addition of our three newest members, Carol Essert, Taly Louria Hahn, and Phyllis Diamond.

The results of the hard work, commitment and creativity of all our volunteers will be on display Labor Day weekend, at the Academy's much loved "Festival of Books." This year's event

In the Gallery

9th Annual Members' Show

October 5 – November 3

To submit work you must be a current member of the Academy as of September 6. All media is accepted. "The atmosphere of this event is always relaxed and joyful for everyone," notes Curatorial Committee chair Norma Cohen. "The artists enjoy meeting each other. And there is no anxiety about jurying or any kind of selection process." There can be as many as 80 pieces of art shown, she adds, "so it's a wonderful opportunity for us to consider work for future invitational shows." For more information, visit our website.

The deadline for submission for this popular show is September 6. <https://spencertownacademy.org/members-art-show-submission-guidelines>

Events at the Academy

THEY CAME, THEY SAW, THEY DANCED

The first Twilight BBQ Party is a rousing success.

With the Hidden Gardens Tours, the Academy's traditional summer kickoff event, taking a breather, it fell to our annual fund-raising dinner to play that role. "We looked hard for something a bit different," recalls dinner committee co-chair Charlie Baum. "We took a chance that we

THE TWILIGHT BBQ DANCE PARTY could appeal to both our loyalists and attract some new faces who might become members of the Academy."

The Twilight BBQ Party was indeed a bit different – and a rousing success. The event, which took place on June 29 on the grounds of the Austerlitz Historical Society, was sold out,

the Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nick Van Alstine, President
Madaline Sparks, Vice President
Jo-Anne Bilotti, Treasurer
Jill Kalotay, Secretary
Eve Zatt, Administration

Cindy Atkins
Charlie Baum
Judith Choate
David Cudaback
Phyllis Diamond

Carol Essert
Wayne Greene
Taly Louria Hahn
David Highfill
Lisa Bouchard Hoe

MEMBERSHIP

Are you a current member of the Spencertown Academy?
Visit our website to sign up or to renew your membership today!
We thank you for your support.

PLEASE VISIT

spencertownacademy.org
for information on programs, membership, and volunteer opportunities or to subscribe to our e-blast list.

promises to be a great one. In addition to a collection of over 15,000 gently used books, we have an exciting lineup of award-winning authors, headlined by our neighbor and friend, Ruth Reichl, celebrated novelist and food writer, talking about her latest book. Hundreds of hours go into planning and producing this event by volunteers who enjoy being surrounded by books, working with neighbors, meeting new friends and supporting the Academy.

And it doesn't stop there. We'll round out the year with more music concerts, gallery shows and a writers' conference.

Meanwhile, I hope to see you at the Festival of Books, and as always, thank you for your support of the Spencertown Academy.

Richie Anne Bilotti



CALL TO ARTISTS

Small Works 2024

November 16 – December 15

The exhibit will focus on the region's best small arts and crafts. "At many shows, it's the larger artwork that gets the attention," says curator Meryl Enerson. "But smaller works can have just as much going on artistically as larger ones. And it's generally easier for our gallery patrons to find room for smaller pieces. Thus small art is a real sweet spot for everyone." Eligibility and other requirements are on our website.

The deadline for submission is September 18.

<https://spencertownacademy.org/small-works-2024-submission-guidelines>



with more than 120 guests in attendance. "Our guests couldn't get enough of Mama Lo's outstanding BBQ offerings," says Baum. "And the dance floor was full from the 5:00 opening until lights out at 9:00, thanks to the wonderful

'get-up-off-your-you-know-what-and-dance' music

BBQ DANCE PARTY from the Silver Arrow Band." An eclectic array of items donated by supporters of the Academy was offered for Silent Auction, and the proceeds contributed a robust amount to the bottom line.



THE REDEMPITIVE POWER OF SONG

Folk singer-songwriter Mary Gauthier performs at the Academy. With special guest: Jaimee Harris

Gauthier's discography includes a dozen studio albums. Her songs often deal with marginalization, informed by her experience of adoption, addiction and recovery, and growing up gay in the Deep South. Although rarely in the pop/mainstream spotlight, throughout her career Gauthier has won widespread acclaim and awards. She is a regular on the Grand Ole Opry, and currently resides in Nashville, Tennessee. Mary's new album, "Dark Enough to See the Stars," is out now on Thirty Tigers.

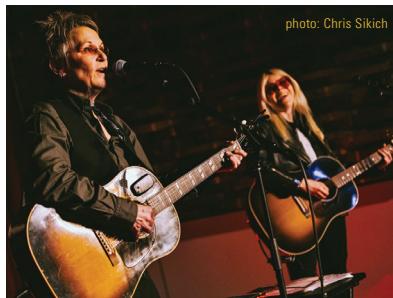


photo: Chris Sikich

NPR Music proclaimed that Texas-born singer-songwriter Harris, who turned 30 during the pandemic, is "poised to become the next queen of Americana-Folk." Her latest album, "Boomerang Town" is an ambitious song-cycle that explores the generational arc of family, the stranglehold of addiction, and the fragile ties that bind Americans together.

General admission tickets (\$30 public, \$25

Academy members) are available via:
<https://spencertownacademy.networkforgood.com/events/71872-mary-gauthier-with-special-guest-jaimie-harris>

...and more music

The Academy has an exciting, multi-genre musical lineup scheduled for the rest of this year

On October 12, we will present **Misty Blues**, a Berkshire County-based band whose 25-year evolution as a contemporary blues band shows how blues can play center stage among a cast of varied genre influences, including jazz, soul, funk and tent revival gospel. The band, described by one observer as "the hardest working musical group in New England," is led by founder and singer Gina Coleman, who counts among her influences Koko Taylor, Big Mama Thornton, Billie Holiday, Ruth Brown and the Tedeschi Trucks Band.

MISTY BLUES



The headliners on November 2 will be **Embe Esti**, one of the most original, innovative bands in the Capital Region. A self-styled "intercontinental rhythmic band," Embe Esti cherry-picks genres ranging from rock, blues and funk to Afrobeat, Latin, Middle Eastern, Arabic and silk road sounds, incorporating these and other global traditions into a dynamic stage show.

And on December 7, the Academy will welcome back French-American jazz vocalist **Laura Anglade** and the Ben Rosenblum Trio. Anglade draws inspiration from the great traditional vocal stylists of the 20th century – Sarah Vaughan, Carmen McRae, Ella Fitzgerald, Blossom Dearie, among others – but her voice is uniquely her own. As she digs emotionally into a lyric, her storytelling abilities betray soul beyond her years.



LAURA ANGLADE

In the Gallery



DRAWN TO PRECISION: IN MONOCHROME

Seven artists show how fine art can be produced using simple materials.

The Academy's recent exhibition featured drawings by Stephanie Anderson, Ario Elami, Melissa Forbes, Douglas Gilbert, Maja Kihilstedt, Monica Miller and Kate Minford. "The work is very different," notes co-curator David Lesako, "except for dedication to extreme detail and expressive line quality." Adds co-curator Munya Avigail-Upin: "I'm intrigued by the diversity of drawing styles and how they communicate emotion."



ELAMI



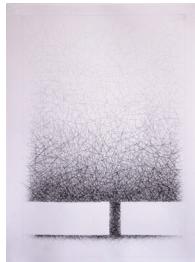
MILLER



MINFORD



FORBES



GILBERT



ANDERSON



KIHLSTEDT

The written word

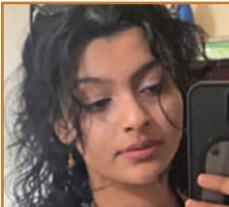
THE WRITE STUFF

Two Academy programs foster the next generation of published writers.

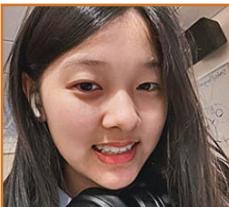
In the age of social media, has good writing become a lost art? Not for the young people in the community served by the Spencertown Academy.

Since 2015 the Academy has sponsored the annual **Young Writer's Contest**. The goal is to encourage creative writing among students in grades 9 to 12 (including home school) in Columbia County and Berkshire County. Each category has three prizes: \$250, \$150 and \$100.

This year's competition attracted 24 students, writing in either fiction or non-fiction (personal essay) categories. Work was judged in an anonymous process by published authors and publishing professionals, who volunteered their services. This



NAZMUN BHUIYAN



HELENA HU

year's winner in the fiction category was Nazmun Bhuiyan, a 10th-grader at Hudson High School. Helena Hu, a 10th-grader at Berkshire School, won the non-fiction category.

"As a former educator, I have been truly encouraged to see the number of high school students submitting entries," says Carol Essert, who directs the program, "with a wide array of fiction and non-fiction work. "The submissions have been well written, thoughtful and engaging reads covering a diversity of subjects and ideas. To meet these talented young writers and read their work, click here: <https://spencertownacademy.org/annual-events/young-writers-contest>



reach their full potential as young writers. I was pleasantly surprised by the beautiful works my kids came up with."

The Academy also sponsors **Poetry in the Park**, now in its third year, as part of the Summer Recreation Program of the town of Austerlitz. The project grew out of conversations about how the Academy might use some of its first NYSCA grant funds to help deliver programming to children.

Led by poet and author Even Christine Gardiner, youngsters aged 5 to 14 engage in various activities involving writing, largely but not exclusively poetry. "The goal is to make writing fun and accessible," says Gardiner. "This year kids combined the poetic and visual arts to create concrete self-portraits." The program, adds camp director Debbie Oleynek, "expanded the children's ability to

Ode to Honey in
golden a jar
golden yellow
yellow gold, thick and
sticky sweet like
the bees when they
pollinate. it smells
sweet and only like
Honey.

PUTTING YOUR STORY ON THE PRINTED PAGE

The four-day intensive writing conference – November 7-10 – is in its third year.

The **All Write, Columbia** Non-Fiction Writers Conference is a gathering of writers who share a passion focused on the craft and business of writing non-fiction. Our goal is to challenge, inspire and foster a writer's community that continues beyond the workshops.

The conference, led by award-winning authors Donna Kaz and Mardi Jo Link, is open to all non-fiction writers who are at least 18 years old. "If you have always wanted to tell your story or turn a personal experience into an essay, this conference is for you," says Kaz. "We look forward to gathering a mix of both emerging and veteran writers. All you need to apply is a short nonfiction writing sample and the

AllWrite
COLUMBIA

Just 20 writers will be accepted. Workshops, open readings and other events will be held in person at the Spencertown Academy Art Center, while guest panelists/authors will be Zoomed in. Tuition: \$500. Deadline for submissions: September 30. Full details of the four-day schedule, including guest speakers, are on the website.

Submission link: <https://kazconference.submittable.com/submit/288928/all-write-columbia-nonfiction-writers-conference>

