**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**                  Contact:  Mary Golden Hughes: 434-4475 ext. 135

March 9, 2022 --- Harrisonburg, VA

**Rocktown Author Festival Set for April 9, 2022**

***Event highlights local authors and offers panel sessions on industry topics***

Massanutten Regional Library is pleased to announce the return of *Rocktown Author Festival*, an event which highlights local authors and offers support to attendees who wish to become published authors. *Rocktown Author Festival* will be held on Saturday, April 9, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Central Library in downtown Harrisonburg.

Rocktown Author Festival includes an open forum for the public to meet and greet local authors, purchase their works, and have books signed. The event also includes two panel sessions, led by local experts, designed to inform attendees about getting started in the publishing industry as well as how to find character voice in children’s and young adult writing. The Festival is free and open to the public but advanced registration is required for the panel sessions to limit crowd size for safe pandemic practices. Masks are required for the event and registration is available online at [www.mrlib.org](http://www.mrlib.org).

The schedule for *Rocktown Author Festival* is as follows:

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. - Meet *& Greet Local Authors* (drop-in; no advance registration required) held in the Community Youth Center, 2nd Floor, Central Library. Authors exhibiting this year include a variety of genres and areas of specialty: Chris Barcomb, Sydney Tooman Betts, Tammy Fulk Cullers, P.A. Duncan, Rachel Freed, Allison Garcia, MKB Graham, Gayle Krauss, Sharon Clymer Landis, Margaret Locke, William “Chris” Markham, Jodi Meadows, Lori Mier, John Norment, NoNieqa Ramos, Michael Sullivan, Morgan Vega, and Elwood Yoder.

**1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.: Panel Session I: *Authoring 101: Everything You’ve Ever Wanted to Know About Becoming a Published Author*** (pre-registration required) held in Central Library 1st Floor meeting rooms*.* Panelists include Tammy Cullers (moderator), Lori Mier, Michael Sullivan, and Elwood Yoder.

**2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.: Panel Session II: *“Writing Like an Adult: Thinking Like a Child”***

(pre-registration required) held in Central Library 1st Floor meeting rooms*.* Panelists include Chris Barcomb, Gayle Krause, Jodi Meadows, and NoNieqa Ramos (moderator).

MRL’s *Rocktown Author Festival* was last held in 2019 and was scheduled to take place in March 2020 until the pandemic caused cancellation. “We are thrilled to bring this event to our community to highlight and support local authors, and to celebrate the love of literature together,” stated Susan Versen, Head of MRL Reference/Adult Services. “It is our complete pleasure to welcome these talented authors to our Central Library and to encourage budding writers in our community to see MRL and the Festival as a resource to support their work.”

“As an author, one of the biggest challenges is finding your audience. I’m so grateful to Massanutten Regional Library for showcasing the incredible writing talent right here in the Valley via the Rocktown Author Festival,” stated local author Margaret Locke. “For what better place is there to bring together story lovers and build true community than our local library? MRL’s Rocktown Author Festival is an invaluable experience for authors and readers alike, and I’m excited and proud to be a small part of it.”

For more information on the festival or to pre-register for the panel sessions, head to [www.mrlib.org](http://www.mrlib.org).

***About Massanutten Regional Library:***

*Founded in 1928, Massanutten Regional Library is a seven branch library system that serves nearly 160,000 residents in Harrisonburg, Page County, and Rockingham County. MRL branches are located in Bridgewater, Broadway, Elkton, Grottoes, Harrisonburg, Luray and the town of Shenandoah, with administrative offices located at Central Library in downtown Harrisonburg, the system’s largest branch. Library patrons have access to over 300,000 books, DVDs, audiobooks, eBooks, online learning and research tools, and other resources free of charge. Residents can obtain a free library card by visiting their local MRL branch. As a 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization MRL is funded in partnership with state and local funding and through the generosity of patron donations.*