

Celebrate writing at La Grande's new Lit Week

By John Vollinger

Go! Magazine

LA GRANDE — A new event is coming this month to celebrate poetry, literature and creative writing.

La Grande Lit Week is July 17-23, and prominent authors from the all across the Northwest (and some from even farther) will share readings, talks, seminars and much more. Nick Neely, assistant professor of English/Writing at Eastern Oregon University and the chief organizer of this event, said he wanted to expand on EOU's Master of Fine Arts creative writing program's summer residency to involve the community.

The week begins Sunday, July 17, with a "Lit Trail" spanning a few different venues to highlight some of the local Eastern Oregon gems. The theme, "Writing About Animals," will feature readings from



Eastern Oregon University/Contributed photo

Find a wide range of author readings during La Grande Lit Week, July 17-23.

multiple MFA faculty members as well as two visiting authors, Michael P. Branch and Marina Richie, who will read from their books about the "elusive" Jackalope and Belted Kingfisher.

COMMUNITY CLASSES

For those interested in honing their own craft, nine one-hour community classes will be offered by Lit Week writers on special topics such as "Storytelling Science," "Writing Toward Joy" and "Demystifying Historical Fiction." Anyone can register for these sessions for \$20 via the Lit Week website: www.eou.edu/mfa/litweek. All classes will be held in Badgley Hall on the EOU campus.

The Lit Trail begins with a reading at Elgin's Jewel Theatre at 2 p.m., and move to La Grande with additional readings and a panel at JaxDog Cafe and Books (4:30 p.m., 1305 Adams Ave.), the Liberty Theatre Cafe (5:15 p.m., 1012 Adams Ave.) and Side A Brewing (6 p.m., 1219 Washington Ave.).

For those interested in poetry, poet Laura Da', winner of a Washington State Book Award, will read at Cook Memorial Library at 7 p.m. Monday, July 18, and three poets will share work near Morgan Lake on Tuesday, July 19 at 6:30 p.m. For this latter event, called "Poetry in the Pines," it is suggested that you bring some camp chairs and a picnic.

There will be a change of pace at 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 20, with HQ, 112 Depot St., hosting Kathryn Miles and her true crime book "Trailed: One Woman's Quest to Solve the Shenandoah Murders." Attendees are welcome to stick around for a musical performance by Hillfolk Noir to round out the evening.

"We wanted to include music on a few occasions — come for the reading, stay for the tunes," Neely said.

For those more interested in fiction, Side A Brewing will host Leyna Krow, who will read from her mystery book "Fire Season," offering a story for the Great Spokane Fire of 1889. This is at 7 p.m. Thursday, July 21.

On Friday, July 22, HQ will have readings by MFA students at 6:30 p.m., followed at 7:30 p.m. by Jon Raymond and his new climate fiction novel "Denial," which officially releases July 26.

MFA students will also read at 3 p.m. Saturday, July 23, at EOU's Schwarz Theatre.

The week will finish with a reading at 7 p.m. Saturday at The Local, 1508 Adams Ave., by Emily Prado and her book "Funeral for Flaca," which won a Pacific Northwest Book Award. A DJ set follows at 8 p.m.

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